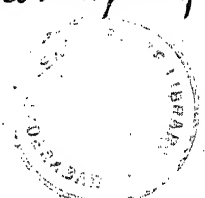


We need not answer till after Mr. Ivvieby
has discussed the matter here. If ~~the~~ the
conference was to be at Constantinople it would
be some solution to the revenue people of the
Pinks, but we should have to be sure beforehand
that the outcome would be not unsatisfactory
to Pinky.

E.G.



I do not like the notion of
Constantinople as to what I
conference, unless the issues to be
discussed are very few, and
very strictly defined beforehand.
The atmosphere of oriental intrigue
in which everything at Constantinople
is bathed, is unfavourable to
honest diplomacy. The experience
of 1876 and 1882 illustrate what I mean.

E.G.

Oct. 3/08

NOTICE.

Special circumstances, for which the Editors are not responsible, have caused a delay in the publication of Volume IV. Volumes IV and VI will deal mainly with Anglo-Russian and Anglo-German relations between the years 1906-9. The present volume (V) deals with the Near East between the years 1903 and 1909.



British Documents on the Origins of the War

1898-1914

Edited by G. P. GOOCH, D.Litt., F.B.A., and
HAROLD TEMPERLEY, Litt.D., F.B.A.

Vol. V THE NEAR EAST The Macedonian Problem and the Annexation of Bosnia

1903-9

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VOLUME V

THE NEAR EAST

The Macedonian Problem and the
Annexation of Bosnia

1903-9

Edited by

G. P. GOOCH, D.Litt., and HAROLD TEMPERLEY, Litt.D.,

with the assistance of

LILLIAN M. PENSON, Ph.D.

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Foreword to Volume V.

THE decision to publish a selection from the British Documents dealing with the origins of the War was taken by Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Prime Minister and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in the summer of 1924. It was confirmed and announced by Mr. (now Sir) Austen Chamberlain in a letter of the 28th November, 1924 (published in "The Times" on the 3rd December), addressed to Dr. R. W. Seton-Watson. Some extracts from this letter were published by the Editors in the Foreword to Volume XI, and it need only be said here that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs referred to "impartiality and accuracy" as being the necessary qualifications for any work which the Editors were to publish.

Volume V departs in one sense from the chronological sequence, which the Editors have tried to preserve in their successive volumes. The reason of this is that it deals with a particular phase or angle of European policy—the problem of the Near East and the entanglement of the Great Powers therein. From this point of view the period here treated, the years 1903–9, forms a coherent whole. The insurrections in Macedonia, and the inability of the Turkish Sultan to reform his administration, compelled the Great Powers to intervene, and produced interesting experiments in international government. The chief difficulty of reform consisted in the peculiar system of polity known as the Ottoman Empire, and in its inability or reluctance to adopt Western ideas or to accept the demands of the great Western Powers. The volume, therefore, appropriately begins with a very full study, based on Annual Reports, of that unique machine of government, the Ottoman Empire, in the period just preceding its collapse. Chapters XXXI–XXXII detail the attempts at Reform made by the Powers between 1903 and 1904, and much light is thrown on the difficulties of international action and on the relations of the Powers. Finally, towards the end of 1905, an international naval demonstration took place, from which Germany significantly abstained. The separate activities of the smaller Balkan Powers; the very curious and interesting international problems created by the murder of the Servian monarch, Alexander Obrenović, and by the subsequent Customs' War with Austria-Hungary; the Macedonian problems of 1907–8; the state visit of King Edward to the Emperor Nicholas at Reval; and the Young Turkish Revolution and counter-Revolution; are here related fully from the British point of view. The last part of the volume deals with the rival railway schemes of Austria-Hungary and Russia, and with the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by the former. This step, together with the Young Turkish Revolution, brought the Near Eastern question to the forefront and manifestly increased the tension between the Triple Alliance and the *Entente*. If Morocco was the cause of the first European crisis of the twentieth century, the Near East was clearly the origin of the second. And it is therefore in the events in that area between 1903 and 1908 that the explanation of the Bosnian crisis is to be sought.

The Minutes and other documents of King Edward will be found of much interest in this volume, and the collections of the private correspondence of Lord Grey and Lord Carnock are also of value. The private letters of Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice, the Chief Dragoman of our Embassy at Constantinople, on the Young Turkish Revolution, will be read with great interest in view of his exceptional knowledge of Oriental affairs.

Full use has been made of Annual Reports, especially in the picture of the Ottoman Empire with which the volume opens. In the case of Macedonia also, though much has been published in Parliamentary Papers, there remain gaps which are often conveniently filled from the Foreign Office reports and summaries of the situation. These possess an interest and value of their own because they are often the material

on which the decisions of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs are formed. Two statements made by the Editors, on p. vii of Volume III, that the formal records supply fuller information from the year 1901 onwards, and that the private correspondence deposited in the Foreign Office is more abundant, would seem to be confirmed for the period and topics covered in this volume.

In accordance with the practice of the Foreign Office already observed in the previous Volumes of this series, the documents in the present volume containing information supplied or opinions expressed by certain Foreign Governments have been communicated to them for their agreement. The response has been quite satisfactory.

The Editors have inserted asterisks to indicate gaps or omissions in documents. As a rule these gaps are due to the unimportance of the matter omitted, in which case an indication of subject is usually given. In a few instances, they are due to a desire to consult the susceptibilities of the persons or of the Governments concerned; but the Editors have omitted nothing which they consider essential to the understanding of the history of the period. In addition to despatches and telegrams, there are memoranda and minutes which are properly official documents. No objection has been raised by His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the publication in this volume of any documents of the above kind, nor to the publication of certain similar papers or of private letters, which are not properly official documents, but which are preserved in the Foreign Office.

His Majesty the King has graciously consented to the publication of certain minutes and other papers by King Edward. Lord Fitzmaurice and Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice have been kind enough to give valuable information and advice. In conclusion, the Editors desire to acknowledge the friendly assistance and advice of various officials at the Foreign Office, among whom they would like to mention the Librarian, Mr. Stephen Gaselee, C.B.E., the Historical Adviser, Mr. J. W. Headlam-Morley, C.B.E., and Mr. J. W. Field. They wish also to thank the officials of the Public Record Office in London, Mr. Wright, who is in charge of the Diplomatic and Embassy Archives at Cambridge, and Miss Priscilla Boys-Smith, B.A., who assisted in the preparation of the volume for press.

G. P. GOOCH.

HAROLD TEMPERLEY.

Erratum.

Page 208, *Ed. Note*, Line 2 For "Cronberg" read "Wilhelmshöhe."

Note on the Arrangement of Documents, &c.

As the technical arrangement and details of this volume differ somewhat from Volumes I-II and again from Volume III, some account of the principles followed may be here given.

Within the chapters and their sub-sections the papers are placed in chronological order as in previous volumes; and, as before, chronological order means the date of despatch, whether to or from London, not the date of receipt. The latter date is often added, and readers should be careful to note it. Where the story is told largely in *Annual Reports* or *Foreign Office Memoranda*, the narrative from these sources has been supplemented by inserting the texts of the more important documents involved. These are printed in small print, and attention is called to their character by the use of double brackets and stars at the beginning and end of each series. (See note at the beginning of Chapter XXXI.) Where the text of such documents is actually quoted in *Foreign Office Memoranda*, small print has been used. Certain rules have been followed regarding them; thus, all paraphrases of telegrams appearing in the *Memoranda* are printed by the Editors in the original text, and they have been printed in full documents given in summary. In every case where such changes have been made a note as to their character has been inserted, together with a reference to the source from which the text used has been taken.

It has been thought most convenient to reserve the use of document numbers for the texts of actual documents, so far as possible. Such numbers are therefore not generally given to *Annual Reports* and *Memoranda* themselves, but numbers are duly assigned to the texts of documents imbedded in the *Memoranda* or *Reports*, or added to them by the Editors. In the former case the word "Ann[ex]" is placed after the number (thus, "No. 1 Ann."), and in the latter the words "Ed[itorial] Add[ition]" (thus, "No. 5 Ed. Add.") are inserted.

Many of the outgoing telegrams printed in this volume were sent in identical or similar terms to several Embassies, or were repeated to them for their information. The latter was also done with many incoming telegrams. The form in which this is recorded on the original draft or decypher varies. It has been indicated here, wherever such indication seemed desirable, either by the addition at the end of the document of the phrase used on the original (*e.g.*, "Also to . . .", "Repeated to . . ."), or by a footnote. The phrase "Repeated to Embassies" which is sometimes used, apparently implies only the Embassies in Europe.

Most of the documents for the period 1903-1907 are taken from the official series of Foreign Office papers in the Public Record Office. The classification of these papers for the period 1898-1905 was thus described in the note prefaced to Volumes I and II (p. ix) :—

"They are classified mainly by country (F.O. France, etc.), and within countries by years. For each year the diplomatic documents are separated from the commercial and other classes. Within the diplomatic class there are volumes of outgoing and incoming despatches, outgoing and incoming telegrams, communications with the Foreign Ambassador ("Domestic") and with other Government Departments ("Various"). Papers relating to certain subjects have been specially treated. Some have been placed together in a miscellaneous series (F.O. General), as in the case of the Hague Peace Conference. In other instances

all papers relating to a certain geographical area have been placed together, as with African affairs (after 1899) and the affairs of Morocco. Correspondence with the British representative at Paris or elsewhere appears in these cases under F.O. Africa and F.O. Morocco. A third method was to separate the correspondence relating to a special aspect of affairs from the other papers of the country concerned, thus removing them from chronological sequence. This was the case with despatches on African affairs down to 1899, which appear in special series of F.O. France (Africa), F.O. Germany (Africa), etc."

The note prefaced to Volume III (pp. ix-x) described further the arrangement inaugurated at the beginning of 1906:—

"A new system was inaugurated at the beginning of the year 1906. From that date all papers, irrespective of country, are first divided into certain general categories, "*Political*" (the former "*diplomatic*"), *Commercial*, *Consular*, *Treaty*, etc. The papers are, however, not removed from their original files, the contents of each file being treated as one document. The files of papers are classified within the general categories according to the country to which their subject most properly belongs. The volumes containing papers relating to any country are therefore in a sub-section of the main series, and these sub-sections are arranged in alphabetical order (e.g., *Political*, Abyssinia, etc.). Previously the correspondence with, say, the British Ambassador at Paris was kept distinct from the communications of the French Ambassador in London, the latter being termed "*Domestic*." This distinction is now abolished and all papers relating to a subject are placed together in one file or in a series of files. The historian finds many difficulties in this arrangement, as the files are not arranged in the volumes in chronological or alphabetical sequence. The Foreign Office overcomes these difficulties by compiling a manuscript register of the contents, but this method cannot be used so satisfactorily by the historian. It is to be feared that the new arrangement makes it more difficult for the historian to be sure he has found all the papers relating to a given incident."

The Editors are informed that the system of arrangement started in 1906 will be continued for the remainder of the period down to the outbreak of the War; but at present this process of arrangement in bound volumes has reached only part of the year 1908. Beyond this date the documents are still at the Foreign Office in the original loose files, and have not been sorted into any regular sequence. The task of surveying the available material is thus one of great difficulty. The Editors hope that it has been fulfilled adequately by the combination of three methods. A large proportion of the more important papers are printed in the bound volumes of the many series of the "*Confidential Print*," and from the references given in these access to the originals in the Foreign Office files is easy. The printed texts can then be checked and the notes and minutes reproduced from the originals. Secondly, application has been made to the Foreign Office library staff for papers to which accidental reference has been found. Thirdly, the Foreign Office registers of despatches and telegrams sent to or received from every British Embassy or Legation have been at the disposal of the Editors for the purpose of searching for documents not otherwise to be found. It is hoped that by the use of these means the danger of material omissions has been overcome; but the position is not nearly so satisfactory as in the period for which a strict chronological series exists.

The use of the Embassy archives to supplement the documents found in the Foreign Office series is possible after 1905 only in the case of Japan (to 1910) and Russia, and some of the Russian Embassy archives have been destroyed. The other Embassies and Legations, as recorded in the note prefaced to Volume III (p. x), have not yet sent

their later papers to England. This is a serious handicap to the Editors, as they have often found valuable information in the Embassy Archives which was not available elsewhere. In the case noted, that of Russia, some documents have been checked from the Embassy Archives, and an important document (p. 456, No. 394), of which the full text was not otherwise obtainable, has been printed from them. It is notable, however, that no case has yet arisen in this later period in which documents appearing in the "Confidential Print" have proved unobtainable in the original. This fact seems to show that the records are more exact and complete after 1906.

The private collections available at the Foreign Office are more complete after the beginning of the year 1906. The private correspondence of Sir Edward (Lord) Grey contains papers of the highest value, and that of Sir Arthur Nicolson (Lord Carnock) increases in importance with each year. The latter happens to be rather scanty on the Near East during the period covered by this volume, but the former includes some authoritative letters by Sir Edward Grey upon the Macedonian Reforms, and by Sir Nicholas O'Connor and Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice on the Young Turkish Revolution. Sir Charles Hardinge's memoranda upon King Edward's visits are quoted in full, in so far as they refer to visits described in this volume.

The value of minutes increases as a later period is reached, and the present volume contains many of great interest by King Edward, Sir Edward Grey, Sir Charles Hardinge, Lord Fitzmaurice, and others.

Plan of Volume V.

Chapter XXX is a description, derived from the Annual Reports, of the Turkish Empire on the eve of its fall. The whole machinery of government is sketched. The characters of the officials of the Palace and of the Porte are given, and the description of the fall of Fehim Pasha, the head of the Secret Police, throws a strong light on the Hamidian regime. The section on Public Opinion and Education is an interesting exposition of how far a despotism could extend its governmental control. The system of provincial administration throughout the Empire is described, and accounts of the Turkish Army and Navy, of the Hamidian Diplomacy, of Turkish Finance and Concessions follow. A complete full-length picture of a powerful oriental despotism is thus given.

Chapter XXXI deals with the International control of Macedonia during 1903-4. Events leading up to the Mürzsteg Punctuation are described partly in a report, partly in illustrative documents (pp. 49-65). The Gendarmerie Reforms of 1904 are not described in detail, as much information on them is contained in the Parliamentary Papers. A series of documents (pp. 67-75) throws light on the International Relations of the Great Powers between February and May, 1904.

In Chapter XXXII the demands of the Powers for financial reform in Macedonia (January-May 1905), occupy the first pages (pp. 76-80). The second part of the Chapter deals with the enforcement of those demands upon Turkey by a naval demonstration of the Great Powers from which Germany held aloof (pp. 80-99).

Chapter XXXIII deals with the activities of the various nationalities in Macedonia during the years 1902-7, including especially the Bulgars, the Serbs, the Greeks and the Rumans. Most of the evidence is from Annual Reports, and the whole forms a connected summary over a series of years, giving a general survey of the subject.

Chapter XXXIV, entitled "Serbia and the Great Powers (1903-7)," deals with two well-known incidents of her internal history which became of European importance. The first part (pp. 124-148) details the effect on the diplomatic situation produced by the assassination of the last Obrenović King of Serbia and of his Consort. The attitude of Great Britain is revealed in full detail. The Memoranda on the subject by Lord Lansdowne and Sir Edward Grey, and the document in which King Edward conveyed his decision to resume diplomatic relations, are here printed in full for the first time (pp. 142-4). The second section deals with the Servian Customs-War with Austria-Hungary, 1906-7, an important incident of European diplomacy. It will be seen from various documents (pp. 148-9, 154-5, 156-9) that the Servian Government's attitude was fully understood and appreciated by the British Government.

"Turkey and the Great Powers in 1906" is the title of Chapter XXXV. The first section (pp. 168-174) is an extract from the Annual Report on the working of the financial Reform in Macedonia. The second illustrates the relations of the Great Powers with Turkey during the year, and contains an important memorandum by Mr. (afterwards Sir Adam) Block respecting Franco-German economic penetration of Turkey (pp. 175-184). The chapter ends with an extract from the Annual Report referring to the Sinai Boundary Dispute between Great Britain and Turkey, and describing the measures by which a British naval squadron settled the matter. Some details are added to those already published in the Parliamentary Paper on the subject.

Chapter XXXVI details the progress of the Macedonian Reforms, 1907-8. The increasing friction between Austria-Hungary and Russia on this subject is described, and a full report given by Sir Charles Hardinge on the visit of King Edward to the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl (pp. 208-211). The interview between Sir Nicholas O'Connor and the Sultan Abdul Hamid on the 6th December, 1907, is also of considerable importance (pp. 217-9). Sir Edward Grey's private correspondence (pp. 219-20, 221-2, 224-30) here published from the 17th December, 1907, onwards, shows an increasing anxiety at the situation. In his circular of the 18th December he made a strong appeal for more effective gendarmerie control, and the latter part of the chapter deals with the demand for Judicial and other Reforms by the Powers, and the resistance of the Turks until revolution broke out.

The state visit of King Edward to the Emperor Nicholas at Reval on the 9th-10th June, 1908, forms the subject of Chapter XXXVII. The growing fear evinced by Austria-Hungary at the Anglo-Russian rapprochement over Macedonia is reflected in the documents from February 1908 onwards. The interview itself and its outcome are fully reported.

Chapter XXXVIII deals with the Young Turkish Revolution, 1908-9. A Parliamentary Paper was published on this, but much new detail is here supplied from the private correspondence of Sir Edward Grey, of Sir Nicholas O'Connor and of Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice. Extracts from the Annual Report sketch the new personalities in Turkey, and show the effect of the revolution both in the capital and in the provinces in some detail. Section II deals with the equally important effects produced upon the Great Powers by this most unexpected upheaval (pp. 308-313). The counter-Revolution and the fall of Abdul Hamid (1909) are described in the third section (pp. 313-320) in a very long despatch by Sir Gerard Lowther, and commented on in a very short private letter by Sir Edward Grey.

The dispute about the Adriatic and Novibazar Railways in 1906-8 forms the subject of Chapter XXXIX. It appears from these documents that a railway through Serbia and Albania to the Adriatic was actually projected in 1906, and the *Grosse Politik* shows that Baron von Aehrenthal's Novibazar railway scheme was thought of early in 1907.

Chapter XL describes the Bosnian crisis to the end of 1908. The first section deals with the Prelude to Annexation, 1906-8. A despatch of Sir George Buchanan from Sofia of the 7th August, 1907 (pp. 356-8), shows that he already suspected Prince Ferdinand of declaring the independence of his country, and proposed a common line of action between Great Britain and France in such case. This information was reported again by him on the 1st October, 1908, and the complications resulting from this and from the statements of Baron von Aehrenthal on the subject of the independence of Bulgaria and the Austro-Hungarian annexation of Bosnia are related in much detail. King Edward's views on the merits of the question are stated in several minutes. The second section deals with the proposals for a European Conference (pp. 412-460). Much space is given to the action of M. Isvolski, the Russian Foreign Minister, in raising the old question of the Straits and Constantinople, and asking for concessions to Russia in this matter. For the first time full details are given of his conversations with Sir Edward Grey, and the correct and full text of the latter's memorandum on the Straits is printed (p. 441). The third section details the progress of the Austro-Servian dispute from October to December 1908, and quotes from the private correspondence of Sir Edward Grey. Much interest attaches to the details here given of a proposed military convention between Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro (pp. 492-4), and of the British attitude thereon.

The history of the Bosnian crisis is continued in Chapter XLI. The greater part of the chapter deals with the three months of acute crisis at the beginning of 1909 (pp. 547-765), and much interest attaches to the details here given as to the preparation for and the efforts to avoid a conflict. The documents (most of which are printed for the first time) give a full account of the development of Anglo-Russian relations during this critical period, and of the attempts made by various Powers to find a satisfactory formula for settling the Austro-Servian dispute. The questions of recognizing Bulgaria's independence and of acquiescing in the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina alternate with these subjects. By the beginning of April the way was cleared for the settlement of all three problems, and the rest of the chapter describes its formal achievement, and the reaction of the crisis upon the position of Russia and Austria-Hungary. Much is here printed from the private papers of Sir Edward Grey and Sir Arthur Nicolson (Lord Carnock).

In the Appendices "the Guéšov and Oriental Railway Incidents" are described in extracts from a memorandum by Mr. (Sir) John Tilley upon "The Turkish Revolution and its Consequences" (March 1, 1909), while "the Montenegrin Negotiations of April-May 1909" are told in an extract from a memorandum by Mr. Alwyn Parker. The third section gives the full text of a memorandum by Sir C. Hardinge on "the Possibility of War," probably written in April 1909, from the Grey papers. Another memorandum by Sir C. Hardinge in the fourth Appendix describes the visit of King Edward to the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl, on 12th August, 1908. Finally, there is an editorial note containing the texts of two telegrams of December 21 and 23, 1908, referring to the suspicion current in Austria-Hungary at the time that "His Majesty's Government at heart desires to bring about a European War." These documents, together with the full account in Chapters XL and XLI, provide an exhaustive collection of material for the study of British policy during the Bosnian crisis.

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List of Abbreviations.

- A. & P.* British Parliamentary Papers, *Accounts and Papers*.
B.F.S.P. British and Foreign State Papers.
G.P. Die Grosse Politik der Europäischen Kabinette.
Siebert B. de Siebert: *Entente Diplomacy and the World War*, edited, arranged and translated by G. A. Schreiner (New York and London, 1921).
 [This is an English translation, with the addition of a chronological list of documents, by the American Editor, of *Diplomatische Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der Entente politik der Vorkriegsjahre* (Berlin and Leipzig, 1921).]
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CHAPTER XXX.

THE TURKISH EMPIRE ON THE EVE OF ITS FALL.

I. THE SULTAN AND HIS EXECUTIVE.

[ED. NOTE.—The system of government in the Turkish Empire explains so much of International Policy from 1903 onwards that it has been decided to give some general account of it. This can fortunately be compiled by selections from the Annual Reports of 1906 and of 1907. These give a complete picture of the Sultan and his Empire on the eve of its fall, and are therefore of unusual interest.](¹)

(a.) *Position of the Sovereign and the Machinery of Government* (2) [1906](²)
(by Ronald Macleay).

Extracts from the Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1906.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Mr. G. Barclay, No. 43 of January 18, 1907,
R. February 11, 1907.)

F.O. 371/345.

The Ottoman Empire may be described as being in principle a theocratic, absolute monarchy. The Sultan of Turkey unites in himself the whole power of the State, ecclesiastical and political, and the lives and fortunes of his subjects are entirely in his hands. Abdul Hamid II is at once a temporal autocrat in his own dominions; and in his capacity of Khalif, or recognized successor and vicegerent of the Prophet Mahommed, the spiritual head of the Orthodox Moslem world.

Character and
Constitution of the
Ottoman Empire.

Although theoretically the Sultan of Turkey is an absolute monarch, his authority both in temporal and spiritual matters, is, in practice, subject to certain limitations. These restrictions are the outcome, in the first case, of the pressure or direct intervention of the European Powers, national custom, local privileges, and, to a lesser degree, of public opinion; and in the case of his spiritual authority, the limitations are to be sought in the obligations imposed upon the Prophet's successors to conform strictly to the precepts of the Koran and the traditions of the sacred law.

Limitations of the
Sultan's absolute
power.

The claim of the Osmanli Sovereigns to the Khalifate reposes on the right of possession by conquest, and dates from the year 1517, when Sultan Selim I destroyed the Mameluke power in Egypt, and obliged Mutawakkil III, a descendant of the Abbassides established in Cairo, to make over to him his nominal Khalifate, together with all the attributes, relics, and other sacred possessions of the office.

The claim of the
Ottoman Sultan
to the Khalifate.

There is no question that by strict Mahommedan tradition the Khalifate could only be held by a member of the Koreish tribe, and candidates for the office were elected by the heads of the religious community at Mecca, although it was customary for the earlier Khalifs to designate during their lifetime the person whom they desired should be elected to succeed them.

(¹) [The Oriental names and words in this volume are frequently spelt in more than one way by different, or even by the same, writers. But in accordance with previous practice (c. *Gooch and Temperley*, I, p. x) it has been thought better to leave the text unaltered. The numbers placed at the end of the headings are the actual section numbers of the report.]

(²) [The Report as a whole was written by Mr. G. Barclay, but the names of the writers of certain special sections are given when known. The Report of 1907 was written by Sir Nicholas O'Connor.

The Report of 1906 was endorsed by Sir E. Grey "There is a good deal in it though it is incomplete and it is interesting."]

In spite of the fact that the claim of the Osmanli Sultans to fulfil these conditions is obviously fictitious and untenable, their position as Khalifs has never been disputed by the Sunnite Mahommedans, and not merely by those who are subjects of the Ottoman Empire, but also by the members of the same sect in India, Arabia, and Africa. The sovereignty over the Holy Places of Islam and the possession of the sacred relics, including the Prophet's sword and mantle, appear to be recognized as constituting an unimpeachable title to the sacred office of "successor" to the Prophet.

The strength of the Sultan's position was demonstrated by the anti-English agitation among the Egyptian Mahommedans, which characterized the recent dispute between Great Britain and Turkey in regard to the Sinai boundary, and, although the movement was doubtless in great measure artificial, its chief feature was the resentment expressed at any attempt being made by a foreign Power to coerce the Head of Islam; and special stress was laid on this sacrosanct character of the Sultan and on the fanaticism of Mahommedans in regard to this article of their Faith in the interesting anonymous letter received by the Earl of Cromer during the height of the controversy.

Machinery of
Government.
The Imperial
"Divan."

The present machinery of government in Turkey is a development of the Board or Council known as the "Divan," which was instituted by the Khalif Omar I on Persian models in order to control and administer the finances of the Khalifate. The system was extended by the Abbassid Dynasty to include other Government functions, and was subsequently adopted by the Osmanli Sultans. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Imperial Divan included the following high dignitaries of State: The Kiaya Bey, the Director of Internal Affairs; the Defterdar, Comptroller of the Exchequer; the Reis Effendi, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs; the Nishandji, Keeper of the Seals; the Kaptan Pasha, Commander of the Fleet; and the Grand Mufti or Sheikh-ul-Islam. The Council was presided over by the Grand Vizier, an office of Persian origin, which Orkhan, the second Sultan of the Osmanli Dynasty, is said to have introduced.

The Grand
Vizierate.

The Grand Vizier acted as the Sultan's lieutenant and the depositary of his temporal authority. The administration of justice, the management of the revenues, and even the command of the Imperial forces, devolved upon him.

The Grand Viziers were chosen arbitrarily by the Sultans, and often without respect to talent, fitness, or any other qualification for such an important post. Their powers are limited only by the strength of will and individuality of the Sovereign. Under some of the weak, effeminate Sultans of the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries the Grand Viziers have been practically omnipotent; under stronger and more autocratic Rulers their rôle has been reduced to that of a subservient Prime Minister.

The administration of justice formed one of the chief attributes of the Imperial Divan, and the growing importance of this branch of its functions led to the division of the Council into two sections: the one occupying itself with political and administrative questions, and meeting at the Palace; and the other dealing with Petitions and judicial matters, and having its place of assembly at the Sublime Porte.

The "Divan" the
origin of the
Council of
Ministers and
Council of State.

Out of the first of these two bodies has been evolved the present Council of Ministers, and the other formed the nucleus of the composition of the present Council of State.

The influence of Western thought and civilization has led to the conversion of the various offices of State, which composed the Divan of the earlier Sultans, into permanent Departments, framed on European models, and each directed by a Minister appointed by the Sultan.

Position of Grand
Vizier with
reference to the
other Ministers of
State.

The Grand Vizier is President of the Council of Ministers, but he cannot, strictly speaking, be called a Prime Minister, as the responsibility of the Ministers to the Sovereign is individual, and not collective. The Grand Vizier is the usual mouthpiece of the Government, and the wishes and commands of the Sultan are made known by him to his colleagues. He can issue instructions to the other Ministers and the

Heads of the various Departments, and he exercises a practical control over the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as his Highness assumes the responsibility for the international relations of the Empire, and all important questions of foreign policy are discussed directly between him and the foreign Representatives at Constantinople.

The actual Departments of State, which, in their aggregate, are known officially as the Sublime Porte, comprise the Grand Vizierate, the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, of the Interior, of Finance, Justice, Public Instruction, Marine, War, Commerce, and Public Works, Pious Foundations, Mines and Forests, and Police.

The Ministry of the Interior was created in 1860, the period of the introduction of the final organic reforms of the Administration of the Ottoman Empire. The administrative sphere of this Department has, however, never been strictly defined, and its powers are exercised conjointly with the Grand Vizier's Department and the section of the Council of State which deals with internal affairs. The Ministry is chiefly occupied with the control of the provincial administration, but it contains several subordinate Departments, viz., the Commission for the Selection of Employés, the Board of Control of the Public Services of Government Officials, the Direction of Pension Funds, the Supervision of the Press, the Census Bureau, the Emigration Bureau, and the Passport Bureau. The Sanitary Administration of the Empire and the Prefecture of the City of Constantinople are also subordinate to this Ministry.

The existing provincial administration of the Empire was adopted in 1864 as the result of some successful reforms introduced by Midhat Pasha in the Vilayet of the Danube, of which he had been made Governor. By this system the whole of the Ottoman Empire was divided, irrespective of race distinctions, into a number of vilayets, which were in turn subdivided into sanjaks, kazas, and nahiés, corresponding roughly to French départements, arrondissements, cantons, and communes. The vilayet is governed by a Vali, or Governor-General; the sanjak by a Governor, or Mutessarif; the kaza is under the control of a Prefect (Kaimakam); and the nahié under that of a Mudir, or Mayor.

The principal object of the scheme appears to have been the centralization of the internal administration of the Empire in the hands of the Ministry, with a view to reducing the independence of the old "eyalets," or provinces, as well as the importance of their Governors. This policy has been assiduously pursued by the present Sultan, who has found the erection of a network of telegraph lines uniting the most distant parts of his Empire to the capital a most effective means of bringing the entire machinery of local administration under his immediate supervision and control.

A large class of civil servants has been formed to carry out the work of this highly centralized system, and they receive their training in the different Departments at Constantinople, which is supposed to qualify them for administrative posts in the provinces. The Palace, however, constantly interferes in these appointments, and the more desirable or lucrative posts of Vali, Mutessarif, and even of Kaimakam, are bestowed upon Palace favourites, to the exclusion of the proper Ministerial candidates, while the distant and undesirable posts are used as convenient places of exile for prominent officials who have had the misfortune to incur the Imperial displeasure.

The Ministry of Justice dates from 1879, when the whole judicial system of the Empire was profoundly modified by the creation of the "Nizamié" Tribunals, composed of local and provincial Courts of First Instance and Appeal, with a Court of Cassation at Constantinople for the hearing of criminal and civil cases. At the same time the Court of Appeal was divided into three Chambers, dealing with penal, civil, and commercial cases, respectively, and the Commercial Courts and Commercial Court of Appeal were transferred from the control of the Ministry of Commerce to that of the new Ministry of Justice.

The judicial organization controlled by the Ministry is confined to the common and civil law Tribunals, in which the procedure followed is based on French jurisprudence. All questions relating to personal status, succession, pious foundations, slavery, &c., are governed by the canonical law of Islam, and are tried by religious Courts, which

The Sublime Porte.

Ministry of the Interior.

Provincial administration of the Empire.

Palace interference with the Civil Service.

Ministry of Justice.

Independence of the religious Tribunals.

are under the supreme control of the Sheikh-ul-Islam, and are quite independent of the Ministry of Justice.

The Minister of Justice is also Minister of Religions, and the ecclesiastical authorities of all non-Moslem communities are subject to the control of his Department.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is necessarily overshadowed by the Grand Vizier, and the present holder of the office plays but a secondary part in the direction of the foreign policy of his Government.

Ministry of Marine.

In spite of the relative insignificance of Turkey's naval forces, the post of Minister of Marine is still considered as one of the most important in the Government, and the Minister is always present at the discussion of any serious business by the Council of Ministers.

Council of Ministers.

The Council of Ministers meets at the Porte every Sunday and Wednesday, under the presidency of the Grand Vizier, to transact business of State and to give their advice on matters referred to them. Besides these regular meetings, special councils (called "Endjumen") are frequently summoned to assemble at the Palace by the Sultan. Although His Imperial Majesty does not assist at the deliberations of these councils in person, he frequently occupies an adjoining room, from which he can follow the discussion and communicate with the Grand Vizier and individual Ministers when he so desires. This practice is not conducive to any display of independence by Ministers whose views on any question may not happen to coincide with those of their Royal Master. The Council of Ministers is composed of the Grand Vizier, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Interior, Finance, War, Marine, Justice, and Public Instruction, the President of the Council of State, the Grand Master of Artillery, and the Sheikh-ul-Islam.

Council of State.

The Council of State, like the Council of Ministers, owes its origin to the Grand Divan, but the institution underwent several considerable modifications before assuming the form in which it exists at the present day. The tendency of all these modifications was to separate the judicial functions of the Council from its purely administrative duties in civil, legislative, and financial questions. In 1868 an Organic Law for the creation of the Council of State was promulgated, which declared that the Council of State was the central institution of the Empire to deliberate on affairs connected with the general administration. Its duties were prescribed as being :—

1. To examine and prepare all projects of law and statutory enactments;
2. To pronounce on all matters connected with the public administration which were comprised within the limits of its attributions;
3. To decide points at issue between different Government Departments ("contentieux administratif");
4. To take cognizance of conflicts of attributions between the administrative and judicial authorities;
5. To give advice on the Reports received from the various Departments of the Administration relating to the laws actually in force;
6. To judge officials whose conduct may be submitted to it for trial by special Imperial Iradé or in virtue of the laws of the Empire; and
7. To give advice on all questions on which it may be consulted by the Sovereign or his Ministers.

The Council was divided into the following five sections, viz. :—

1. Home Affairs and War;
2. Finances and Pious Foundations;
3. Legislation;
4. Public Works, Commerce, and Agriculture; and
5. Public Instruction.

The reports of the meetings of the whole Council, as well as those of the individual sections, were to be made direct to the Grand Vizier. A President, with the rank of a Minister of State, was appointed to preside over the whole Council, assisted by a Secretary-General and the Vice-Presidents of the five sections. All these officers, as well as the other members of the Council, are appointed by the Sultan. It was specially enacted that the Council of State was to be a purely consultative and deliberative Assembly, and have no executive powers.

The Organic Law of 1868 was subsequently modified by a Decree of 1896, which established the complete independence of the judicial section of the Council, and created three new Administrative Tribunals, viz.: the Courts of First Instance, Appeal, and Cassation, which, though deriving their powers from the Presidency of the Council of State, were placed under the control of the Ministry of Justice. Decree of 1896.

By the same Decree the Council of State was divided with respect to its remaining attributions into three sections: civil, financial, and legislative. The powers of the civil section were considerably enlarged, as it was intrusted with the revision of certain subjects which had already been submitted to the financial and legislative sections, more especially all matters relating to applications for concessions, specifications for contracts, laws and regulations. This section was also given limited powers of examination and modification of all questions connected with the levying and increase of existing taxation. In 1908 the civil section was composed of sixteen members, the legislative section of twenty-nine, and the financial section of twenty-five. These numbers are, however, constantly changing.

It will be seen that in theory the Council of State has almost the scope and functions of a Legislative Assembly; but in practice the powers of the Council are very limited. It has no right of initiative, and is only occupied with the matters submitted by the Grand Vizier for its consideration. If its "mazbata," or official report, on any point is unsatisfactory to the Sultan, it is returned to the Council for amendment; and as the members are appointed by the Sultan, and can be dismissed at his pleasure, the decisions of the Assembly are usually in the nature of a foregone conclusion.

In the transaction of public business the Sultan depends largely on the assistance of his First and Second Secretaries, who are selected by him without reference to the Grand Vizier or the Council of Ministers. Their influence with the Sultan is very great, and they naturally become the centre of Palace intrigues. They frequently hold views and pursue policies which are diametrically opposed to those of the Grand Vizier and the majority of the Ministers. The Sultan's Secretaries.

The importance of securing the appointment of men who would work loyally with the Grand Vizier and the Council of Ministers to the post of Secretary to the Sultan was so well understood by the Reform Party in 1876, after the deposition of Sultan Murad had been decided upon, that Midhat Pasha was deputed to demand at a secret interview with the heir-apparent (the present Sultan) as one of the conditions of the support of the party on the Prince's accession to the throne, that he should appoint Zia Bey and Kemal Bey, two staunch adherents of the reformers, to be his Private Secretaries.

It is said that the Prince consented to this stipulation; but one of his first acts on ascending the throne was to dismiss the two Secretaries designated by Midhat Pasha and to appoint men of his own choice.

Sultan Abdul Hamid II has laboured throughout his long reign to concentrate all authority into his own hands, and at the present day no new Law, Edict, Decree, Firman, or any executive Act can issue or be valid without the sanction of an Imperial Iradé. The Sultan also interferes in the selection and appointment of candidates for all important posts in the military, naval, civil, and diplomatic services of the Empire. Centralisation of all authority in the hands of the Sovereign.

It has already been mentioned that the autocratic powers of the Sultan in temporal matters are subject to certain limitations. Among the most important of these are the special privileges of extra-territorial jurisdiction enjoyed by foreigners resident in the Ottoman Dominion in virtue of the Capitulations. The Powers further claim the right devolving from these same Treaty engagements to refuse to admit the application of Nature of the limitation of the Sultan's temporal powers.
The Capitulations.

new laws to their subjects in Turkey if, in the opinion of the foreign Missions in Constantinople, the enactments may be prejudicial to the interests of their nationals.

Intervention of the Powers.

The Lebanon.

The Island of Samos.

Crete.

Macedonia.

Foreign control over Turkish finance.
The Ottoman Bank and the Public Debt Administration.

Public opinion in Turkey; the riots at Erzeroum in 1906.

Restrictions to the Sultan's liberty of action in spiritual affairs.

The "Ulemas" class.

The Sheikh-ul-Islam.

Importance of the office.
Power of decreeing the deposition of the Sultan
Instances of the power of deposition exercised by Sheikh-ul-Islam.

Instances of the limitation of the Sovereign's authority arising from the intervention of the European Powers may be found in the special régime accorded to the district of the Lebanon under the administration of a Christian Governor nominated for a term of five years by the Sublime Porte, with the consent of the intervening Powers. In 1832 a special charter of liberties was secured for the Island of Samos by the intervention of Great Britain, France, and Russia, when the island was created an autonomous Principality under a Prince Governor appointed by the Porte.

More recently the Island of Crete has received, through the intervention of the four Protecting Powers (Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy), an autonomous constitution under a High Commissioner, whose appointment is now vested in the King of Greece, the island remaining under the merely nominal suzerainty of the Sultan.

In Macedonia the civil administration of the Provinces of Salonica, Kossovo, and Monastir, has been modified by the reform schemes introduced under the Mürzsteg Agreement between Austria and Russia, and the appointment of foreign officers to reorganize the local force of gendarmerie. The institution of the Financial Commission in December 1905 secures a modified control by the Great Powers over the administration of the finances of the three provinces.

The specially privileged Ottoman Bank is a financial institution largely controlled by British and French interests; and the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, though nominally a Department of the Ottoman Government, is virtually a foreign control of the chief sources of revenue of the Empire. The Powers have quite recently decided to stipulate that the collection of the additional 3 per cent. customs duty shall be controlled by this institution.

The serious disorders which occurred in the course of 1906 among the Mahommedan population of Erzeroum and other places in Northern Asia Minor, and which were due to the popular discontent at the imposition of a new poll tax, show that the voice of public opinion can still make itself heard in Turkey, and the Sultan found it advisable to endeavour to pacify the malcontents by sacrificing the Governors-General who had endeavoured to levy the obnoxious impost under direct orders from the Central Government.

The limitations imposed on the Sultan in his spiritual position as Khalif are perhaps more cogent, if less evident, than the restrictions which fetter the free exercise of his arbitrary power in temporal affairs. It has been seen that the Sultan is bound to comply strictly with the precepts of the Koran and of the Sacred Law of Islam. The task of maintaining intact the traditions of the Mahommedan faith, and of insuring their observance by the successors of the Prophet, devolves upon the "Ulemas," the Moslem doctors-in-law, whose functions are sacerdotal, juridical, and scholastic, and from whose ranks the Mullahs, the Imams, and the Judges of the Cheri Courts are recruited. At the head of this great class of professed theologians is a State official originally called the Grand Mufti, but now known by the title of Sheikh-ul-Islam, who, besides being the ultimate Court of Appeal in all cases tried by the Cheri Tribunals, is the highest authority and mouthpiece of the Sacred Law, although he does not exercise any priestly function. He is the authorized interpreter of the Koran, and, strictly speaking, no legislative or executive Act can be valid without his sanction pronounced by an authoritative Decree ("fetva") declaring that it is in conformity with the Sacred Law. The great importance of the office lies however, in the power which is vested in the Sheikh-ul-Islam of sanctioning the deposition of the Sultan if the question of the Sovereign's capacity to rule, or his conduct of religious and political affairs is submitted for his decision. The "fetvas" of the Sheikh-ul-Islam are binding upon all Mohammedans in the Turkish dominions; and when in 1876 the Reform party, headed by Mehemet Raisuli Pasha, Midhat Pasha, and Hussein Avni, decided to remove Sultan Abdul Aziz from the throne, they first assured themselves of the support of the Ulemas, and then legalized their action in the eyes of the Moslem population by obtaining a "fetva" from the Sheikh-ul-Islam sanctioning the Sultan's

deposition. The same course was followed shortly afterwards, in the case of Sultan Murad V.

The appointment of the Sheikh-ul-Islam rests with the Sultan, and it is obvious that it is of the highest importance for the Sovereign to select for the office a man in whose personal loyalty and subservience he can have the fullest confidence.

The present Sultan has always been at pains to conciliate the influential class of Sultan Abdul Hamid II's attitude towards the religious element. Muftis, Ulemas, and Softas (theological students) by his opposition to the introduction of any political or social reforms which might offend the conservative principles of orthodox Mahommedans. His Imperial Majesty conforms to the outward observances of his Faith, and he is generous in his support of mosques, schools, and other charitable institutions. He has acquired a reputation for piety among Sunnite Mahommedans outside the boundaries of the Ottoman Empire, by the construction of the Damascus to Mecca pilgrim railway. The severe punishments inflicted at Damascus upon the members of the Ismailian sect, accused of apostacy and treasonable practices, are proof of His Imperial Majesty's determination to crush any attempt at heresy or sedition in his Empire. The spiritual ascendancy of the Sultan has not even been denied by the insurrectionists in the Yemen, although religious motives largely contribute to the strength and obstinate character of the rebellion.

It is perhaps safe to say, with regard to the spiritual hold of the Sultan over his coreligionists, that, with the exception of a limited number of discontented persons whose ideas have been influenced by Western thought and civilization, any disaffection towards the Sovereign which may be aroused by excessive taxation or misgovernment is more than outweighed in the balance of popular estimation by the reverence inspired by his position as Khalif. Great strength of the Sultan's spiritual position as Khalif.

(b.) *Officials of the Palace* (3) [1906] (by Harry H. Lamb).

Chief Secretary.

Tahsin Pasha, a Turk, aged about 47. He entered the Government service as a clerk in the Ministry of the Interior and married a daughter of Ahmed Bey, then Musteshar of that Ministry, who was himself a son-in-law of Mahmoud Nedim Pasha, Grand Vizier and Russian partisan, the tool of Ignatieff.

Passing from the Ministry of the Interior to that of the Marine, he became Secretary-General of that Department under the late Minister Hassan Pasha, on whose recommendation the Sultan promoted him to his present post on the death of Sureya Pasha in 1894. His Majesty has seldom made a happier selection, Tahsin Pasha being exactly the man he required for this confidential, responsible, and extremely arduous position. An excellent clerk and reporter, he is more especially remarkable for his indefatigable assiduity, an extremely retentive memory, and a unique faculty of self-repression, amounting almost to impersonality, which renders him an ideal "insulator" between his Imperial Master and all that portion of the outside world of which it may suit His Majesty's convenience to remain unconscious.

For twelve years on end, summer and winter, Sundays, week-days, and holidays, from 9-30 A.M. to whatever hour of the night or morning His Majesty may be pleased to require his services, Tahsin Pasha has been unremittingly at his post, receiving, classifying, and submitting to the Sultan all the voluminous correspondence of the Sublime Porte and numerous outlying Ministries, hearing and transmitting likewise to the Sultan the communications and requests of all comers—Embassy dragomans, Ministers of State, heads of religious communities, military and naval officers, Ulema, concession-hunters, or mendicant Dervishes—recording and communicating the orders or replies of the Sultan to one and all, or getting rid of them as best he may when no order or reply is forthcoming. During all those years he has enjoyed but one day's respite, and has never been a mile away from Yildiz, save for the annual State visit to Top Kapou on the fifteenth day of Ramazan.

Less supple, less self-interested, and less "remuant" than his principal rival Izzet. Tahsin has never acquired the same ascendant over the Imperial mind, nor aspired to exercise the same influence as the Second Secretary; but neither, on the other hand, has he had to encounter the same ebb and flow of the Imperial favour, nor to incur the same bitter personal enmities. Neither, again, can he have amassed anything like the same amount of wealth, such money as flows into his treasury being mostly squandered by an extravagant household, over which his occupations leave him neither the leisure nor the desire to exercise much control.

Second Secretary.

Izzet Pasha, contemptuously called by the Turks "Arab Izzet," is in some respects the most interesting personality in Turkey, after the Sultan himself, since he may be regarded as the avatar of the "Hamidian system."

Son of a certain Holo Pasha, who was Mutessarif of the Belkaa when Burton was Consul at Damascus, and who, though proprietor of large estates and exercising considerable influence in Syria, would seem to have been of Kurdish origin, he was educated at the Jesuit College in Beyrout and speaks French fluently. He entered the Judicial branch of the Government service, becoming Public Prosecutor in one of the Syrian Tribunals, whence Djevdet Pasha, when Minister of Justice about 1887, being attracted by his evident cleverness, brought him to Constantinople as President of the Mixed Chamber of the Commercial Court. Here he distinguished himself, mainly by his exceptional venality, and gave rise to such universal dissatisfaction that he had to be removed, and was relegated to the Council of State. Izzet, however, was much too resourceful a person to remain for any great length of time in obscurity. Having obtained an entrance to the Palace through the instrumentality of the First Chamberlain, Hadj Ali Bey, a stupid man dazzled by his superficial brilliancy, he very soon succeeded in acquiring a powerful influence over the Sultan by working upon his vanity and upon his personal fears. He has made many gross mistakes and has frequently been on the verge of disgrace, but his extraordinary astuteness and intimate comprehension of his master's character have invariably sufficed to save him from a fall. His best stroke of business was probably the invention of the Hedjaz Railway scheme. Whether the original suggestion was his own or Von der Goltz Pasha's, it was Izzet who brought home to the Sultan's understanding how such an undertaking might serve to strengthen his position as Khalif, by consolidating his hold upon the sacred places of Islam, and enhance its prestige by firing the imagination of Mussulmans throughout the world. The success of this project has probably surpassed his own expectations; and, until the railhead has been advanced at least to Medina, Izzet's position is fairly safe. He is, however, too cunning to rely blindly even on that. The bulk of the enormous fortune that he must undoubtedly have amassed is safely invested in Europe, and every possible preparation made for a rapid flight in case of necessity.

Unlike the First Secretary, who is completely devoted and subservient to his Imperial Master, and, unlike the Grand Vizier, who can rely in a crisis on the support of Germany, Izzet entertains a supreme contempt for the Sultan, and he has absolutely no friends. If the Sultan suspects the former fact—which Izzet, indeed, is at no great pains to conceal from outsiders—he is thoroughly cognisant of the latter; and it is probably that knowledge which has, on more than one occasion, determined him to retain his services. They have, in fact, become mutually indispensable, since the Sultan has found that it is difficult to get on without Izzet; while the latter, knowing himself hated, despised, yet dreaded, so long as he holds the Sultan's ear, by high and low throughout the Administration, finds his own interests inextricably bound up with those of his master.

Chamberlains.

There is at present no one amongst the Chamberlains of the Palace who is capable of exercising any great influence on the course of events.

Hadji Ali Pasha, the First Chamberlain, is almost the only person remaining in the Palace who represents the traditions of the Crimean War. He is a typical old Turk; but being naturally unintelligent, almost illiterate, and now, moreover, practically in his dotage, he is very nearly a nonentity, in spite of his high position.

Nourri Pasha, the Second Chamberlain, is, on the contrary, one of the new school of military Turk, cut to a German pattern, very correct, very stiff, and "boutonné," but also not particularly intelligent nor either capable or desirous of exercising any influence over His Majesty or his *entourage*. *Nourri Pasha* is the official usually designated for the purpose of meeting and attending His Highness the Khedive on his annual visits to Constantinople.

Mehmed Aarif Bey, formerly the most influential of the Chamberlains, entirely sacrificed his influence when about two years ago he espoused the cause of his brother-in-law, *Riza Pasha*, in his feud with *Fehim*, and fled with *Riza* and the latter's brother *Ahmed Pasha*, to Europe. Though he eventually made his peace with the Sultan and returned to Constantinople, he is now but rarely in attendance at the Palace, and is now, moreover, believed to be in a very precarious state of health.

Raghib Pasha, who is perhaps by character and connections more capable than any of the others of achieving a position of influence, appears to devote most of his attention to the acquisition of a fortune by means of commercial and industrial undertakings, for the advancement of which he employs his Palace influence, in preference to political intrigue. A capable and relatively honourable man, he has more or less intimate business relations with members of the British community in Constantinople, and is believed to be well-disposed towards England.

Faik and *Emin Beys* are humbler and less capable imitators of *Raghib*. The former of the two likewise has considerable business relations with English merchants and industrial undertakings in Turkey, and is counted as a British partisan.

Grand Master of the Ceremonies.

Ghalib Bey, son of a certain *Fakhreddin Effendi*, member of the now defunct Financial Council, was born in 1857, and entered the Government service at the age of 17, as clerk in the Department of Foreign Correspondence at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Three years later he was sent as Secretary to the Legation at Belgrade, where he remained about eighteen months, returning to the Ministry as Superintendent of Foreign Correspondence. With the exception of this term of service at Belgrade and a Special Mission to Rome in the summer of 1905, for the purpose of conveying a present of arms from the Sultan to King Victor Emmanuel, he has never been outside Constantinople. In 1880 he was transferred from the Porte to the Palace as "Assistant Introducer of Ambassadors," became in turn "Introducer," and, on the death of *Ibrahim Pasha* last September, "Grand Master of the Ceremonies." He is an extremely agreeable, gentlemanly man, of no great intelligence or force of character, rather timid and retiring by nature, and standing in extreme awe of his Sovereign. He is inclined to be friendly towards England, but is essentially non-political, which, indeed, is his principal qualification for the post.

Introducer of Ambassadors.

Khaïreddin Bey, a compatriot and bitter enemy of the present Grand Vizier, who denounced him as a leader of the Albanian nationalist movement.

Originally attached to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs he was transferred as "Secretary-Interpreter" to the Grand Vizierate by the late *Khalil Rifaat Pasha*, with whom he appears to have had considerable influence. *Ferid Pasha* got him relegated about two years ago to the Council of State, but he was called to the Palace last spring to fill the place in the Department of the Grand Master of the Ceremonies, which had been rendered vacant by the exile of *Abdur Razzack Bey* to Tripoli for the assassination of *Redvan Pasha*. On the promotion of *Ghalib Bey* he was appointed to succeed him, in spite of the Grand Vizier's attempts to prevent it. He is an agreeable, well-read

and rather cultivated man of distinctly liberal views and Anglophil tendencies. Unlike his immediate chief, he is by temperament a keen politician, but his activities are restrained by a keen recollection of narrow escapes from peril in the past, and, further, by exaggerated valetudinarianism. He is one of a gradually increasing number of Mussulmans whose domestic life is conducted on more or less European lines, without the strict separation of Haremlik and Selamlik, though from prudential motives they admit few visitors.

Assistant Introducers of Ambassadors.

Memdough Bey, a pleasant, gentlemanly, but reserved and rather colourless young man of 35; and

Hilmi Bey, son of the late Minister of the Marine, Hassan Pasha, who amassed a very considerable fortune at the expense of the Navy. The latter of the two, never very assiduous in his attendance at the Department, has practically withdrawn altogether since he was passed over for promotion in favour of Khaïreddin Bey. and neither of the two can be accounted as of much importance.

(c.) *Officials of the Porte* (4) (by Harry H. Lamb).

Grand Vizier.

Ferid Pasha, aged about 55, son of Mustapha Pasha, belonging to an influential but not especially distinguished Epirote family, which owns considerable landed property in the neighbourhood of Avlona, and claims kinship with that of the famous Ali Pasha, of Tepeleni.

Ferid first entered Government employment as a clerk in the Administration of the Danube Vilayet, whence he was promoted Kaimakam of Trebinje in the Herzegovina.

Passing from the Department of the Interior to that of Justice, he became Judicial Inspector in Anatolia, but was relegated about 1882 to the Legislative Section of the Council of State, where he remained in relative obscurity, until in March 1898 he was appointed Governor-General of the Vilayet of Konia.

As provincial Governor he acquired a fair amount of credit, being, thanks to his birth and semi-Greek education, of quick, if not very profound, intelligence, amenable to modern ideas, a rapid worker, and disposed to take an intelligent interest in such practical questions as agriculture, irrigation, and improved means of communication. His connection with the Anatolian Railway, the Konia section of which had been opened to traffic a little more than a year when he took up his post as Governor, was, indeed, largely instrumental in attracting to himself the attention and support of the German Embassy, and so led to his appointment to his present post on the resignation of Saïd Pasha in January 1903, a few weeks previously to which he had been summoned to Constantinople with a view to assuming the Presidency of the Commission for Macedonian reforms.

Ferid possesses at least some of the qualities that go to make a good Minister, viz., quickness in grasping a point and in taking a decision, considerable ability for the rapid transaction of business, and a fair amount of courage; but his views are often narrow and his political intelligence and general information limited. He is, however, shifty and unreliable, with a very imperfect appreciation of the value of truth. As Grand Vizier, however, he has, at any rate shown himself a capable administrator and a skilful courtier, knowing how to maintain an extremely difficult position between a suspicious Sovereign and a heterogeneous collection of Ministers, who mostly hate him. In this he has, of course, been largely assisted by the constant and active support of Germany, the German Ambassador, and even the Emperor himself not hesitating to intervene in his favour whenever his position has become critical. At the present moment (December 1906) he would appear to be in higher favour than ever.

Two of Ferid Pasha's brothers occupy official positions at Constantinople, viz.,

Sureya Bey, President of the Council at the Central Customs Administration, whom I have heard him himself describe as a "worthless intrigant"; and *Namyk Bey*, a member of the Sanitary Board.

A full account of Ferid Pasha's rise to his present position is contained in Mr. Block's Memorandum No. 20 of the 19th January, 1903, which was sent home in Sir Nicholas O'Connor's despatch No. 32 of the 21st of that month.

President of the Council of State.

Saïd Pasha, a Kurd, aged 77, native of Suleimanieh, where his father held the post of Mutessarif. He was Minister for Foreign Affairs when Sir William White was Ambassador here, passing from there to Presidency of the Council of State in November 1895.

Saïd Pasha is almost the only member of the present Ministry who is sincerely and consistently Anglophil, but, although he is highly esteemed and respected by all classes of Turks, on account of the uprightness and extreme benevolence of his character, he has little political influence, while his advanced age and increasing decrepitude render him a factor upon which not much reliance can be placed. Fondness for office and a certain innate or traditional loyalty to the Throne have indeed always prevented him from having the courage of his opinions when they were not the opinions favoured in high quarters.

Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Ahmed Tewfik Pasha, an Albanian, aged about 65, has spent most of his life in the Diplomatic Service, having been Secretary at Rome and Berlin, Chargé d'Affaires at Athens, and Ambassador at St. Petersburg and Berlin, whence he was appointed to his present post, as a *persona grata* to Germany in November 1895, in succession to *Saïd Pasha*, now President of the Council of State.

He is an amiable, kind-hearted old gentleman, with no great diplomatic talent or profound knowledge of affairs, but possessing a complete command of his features, unruffled urbanity of manner, and a composure that no crisis has yet been known to disturb, rendering him an ideal Minister for Foreign Affairs under a régime which has reduced the rôle of that functionary to that of a buffer between the Palace, whence the foreign policy of the Empire is directed, and the Representatives of the foreign Powers.

Though his long residence in Berlin, where he married a German wife, renders him naturally susceptible to German influence, he is in no way anti-British, being singularly open-minded and free from prejudice, and he is also generally regarded as free from any suspicion of venality.

Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

Naoum Pasha, aged 55, son of a Syrian doctor named Gabriel Duhany, whose brother owned the Italian Theatre in Pera, which was destroyed by fire in 1870, and had a certain amount of influence with Sultan Abdul Medjid. Entering the Ministry for Foreign Affairs in 1869, he very soon established a reputation for zeal, intelligence, and activity. He acted as Private Secretary to Alexander Caratheodory Pasha at the Berlin Congress, as well as on the occasion of his special mission to Vienna. Being appointed Secretary-General for Foreign Correspondence about 1883, in succession to Nishan Effendi Seferian, he rapidly gained the esteem and sympathy of all the foreign Missions in Constantinople, so that when in 1892 he was proposed as Governor-General of the Lebanon, as successor to the late Vassa Pasha, his nomination was received with general satisfaction and his administration during the first five years was such that no opposition was raised to his reappointment in 1897. Consul-General Drummond-Hay then described him as being distinguished by "great uprightness and integrity, but of a timid nature and too easily influenced by circumstances and by his immediate advisers." Five years later, when there was a question of *Naoum Pasha's*

appointment being once more renewed, Mr. Drummond-Hay was opposed to such renewal, but he admitted that he had little or nothing to say in qualification of the opinions he had then expressed, and acknowledged that there had been much less venality and corruption in the mountain under Naoum's administration than under that of his predecessor. Mr. Drummond-Hay, however, whose own sympathies inclined rather to the Djumblat faction of the Druses, complained that many irregularities and illegalities had been committed owing to the excessive influence exercised over the Governor-General by the Emir, Mustapha Arslan, and by the Maronite clergy. Naoum Pasha therefore, though supported at Constantinople by the influence of Izzet Pasha and of the Melhamé family, was not reappointed, but on returning to Constantinople was appointed to the post of Under-Secretary at his old Ministry for Foreign Affairs, vacated by the death of Artin Pasha Dadian. Though the influence attaching to this position, as to that of the Minister himself, is of constantly dwindling extent, all the more so because the holder is a Christian, Naoum Pasha has succeeded in retaining the sympathy and esteem of all who are brought into contact with him and such influence as he can exercise is invariably and willingly exerted to facilitate the maintenance of friendly relations between the Porte and the foreign Missions. A transparently honest man, with a strong element of *amour-propre*, rather than of ambition, he feels the limitations of his position keenly, but endeavours to conceal his feelings behind a mask of severity and frigidity, which deceives but few.

His name has been mentioned as a possible candidate for the Embassy in London, but there is little likelihood of such an appointment being made under the present régime.

He is married to a daughter of the late Dr. Franco Pasha, one of whose brothers, *Youssouf Bey Franco* (or Coussa), is "Chef du Cabinet Particulier" of the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and has himself been mentioned as a possible Governor of the Lebanon; while another brother, *Fethi Bey Franco*, is employed in the Foreign Press Bureau, with rank as Councillor of State; and a third died recently as Consul-General at Odessa.

Secretary-General for Foreign Correspondence.

Mehmed Nourri Bey, son of a French renegade named Châteauneuf, who was for some years Imperial Commissary on the Smyrna-Aidin Railway; was educated in France, principally at an Agricultural College, and entered the Government service at the Ministry of Mines, Forests, and Agriculture, where he became Director of the last-named Department.

Through the influence of the First Chamberlain, Hadji Ali Bey, he was transferred to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs as Secretary-General for Foreign Correspondence in succession to Naoum Pasha, and has retained that position ever since, though he has occasionally been sent to represent the Ottoman Empire at various International Conferences, notably the Peace Conference at The Hague, a task for which his perfect command of the French language, his wide, if perhaps somewhat superficial, instruction, his active intelligence, and extremely retentive memory combine to render him admirably fitted.

Though all the foreign correspondence of the Ministry passes through his hands, the official position which he has held for the past twelve or thirteen years is really that of a fifth wheel to the coach, as is shown by the fact that his occasional absences for a month or more on end in no way appreciably affect the routine work of the office. Under any other system than the "Hamidian" his undoubted intelligence and capacity for work would be far more usefully employed in some post which allowed them free and legitimate scope; but he is maintained where he is, not on account of the work which he ostensibly performs, but rather as the window through which the Palace observes and controls all that goes on in the Ministry and, so far as his influence extends, in the Diplomatic circles of Constantinople. He is, in other words, a prominent centurion in the legions of Palace spies, amongst whom he ranks high

for the quality of his reports, which he has the talent of making both interesting and agreeable to the taste of the Sovereign. Under an agreeable, cultivated and even refined exterior, he is corrupt and unscrupulous in the extreme.

He has, I believe, been once refused as Ambassador at Vienna; and such suggestions as have been put forward with a view to his eventual appointment to London, which I understand to be his present ambition, have been but coldly received, though he would be quite as worthy a Representative of his country as the actual Ottoman Ambassador in Paris.

Legal Adviser.

Ibrahim Hakki Bey, son of a certain Remzi Effendi, who was President of the Council of the Municipality, was one of the first graduates who issued from the *Mekteb-i-Mülkie*, a school established about 1877 for the training of civil and administrative employés. Hakki Effendi passed such a brilliant examination that the Sultan at once gave him a post as "Secrétaire-Interprète" at the Palace, where he remained until he was sent in company with another Palace Secretary, as Ottoman Commissioner to the Chicago Exhibition.

His return from America happening to coincide with the resignation of Göschler Effendi, the German who had for many years previously occupied the position of Legal Adviser to the Sublime Porte, Hakki Bey was at once appointed to succeed him, in preference to the Second Legal Adviser, Gabriel Effendi, who had naturally looked forward to promotion on the vacancy occurring. Hakki Bey is one of the ablest and, in his own Department, quite the most competent of the present functionaries of the Porte. He is a man of quick perception, clear insight, and rapid decision, firm in character, but at the same time not above modifying his opinions for cause shown—one of the very few Turks, indeed, who are gifted with a really logical and judicial mind. A good Mussulman and sincere patriot, he is, nevertheless, a man of broad views and Europeanized ideas, with a capacity for the intelligent appreciation of music, the drama, and of art. Though not entirely disinterested, he is not accused of venality. Having lost his first wife and his eldest child, he has never remarried, and lives alone with his surviving daughter, to whom he is a devoted father, and he has therefore no particular motive for desiring to amass wealth. Belonging to no particular clique, he is yet a man of considerable influence, being one of a trio which practically directs the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and being consulted both by the Grand Vizierate and by the Palace on all affairs of political importance.

He is Professor of International Law at the *Mülkie School* and the author of several works on international and civil law.

Second Legal Adviser.

Gabriel Effendi, an Armenian, aged 55, son of the late Kirkor Effendi Nouradounghain [*sic*], who acquired a considerable fortune as Chief Baker to the Imperial troops. He entered the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, at the age of 19, as a clerk; went, at 22, an Attaché to the Embassy in Paris, where, however, he remained only a short time before returning to the Ministry; served as Secretary to the Servian Boundary Commission, the Arab Tabia Commission, and the Russian Frontier Commission in 1878 to 1879; was Secretary of Legation in Montenegro from 1880 to 1882, in which latter year he was appointed to the post which he still holds.

A clever lawyer, though with less breadth of view than his Mussulman colleague, he has read a good deal, and has compiled a useful collection of the Treaties and Conventions to which Turkey has been a party.

He is also clever at finance, is President of the "Société Générale d'Assurances Ottomane," and one of the Board of Management of the "Shirket Hâirié" or Bosphorus Steam-boat Company, which is the most successful and best managed, purely Turkish commercial undertaking in existence, and in which the Civil List is also largely interested.

Gabriel Effendi is the most prominent Armenian now remaining in the Government service, and is a member of the Lay Council of the Patriarchate.

Third Legal Adviser.

Mehmed Ali Bey's only claim to notice is the fact that he is "Arab" Izzet Pasha's son. He seldom appears at the Porte, and would be of no use there if he did, except as a spy on his colleagues; but he acts as Bourse agent and general tout for his father.

Minister of the Interior.

Memdough Pasha, a Turk, aged about 70, was Secretary-General in the Grand Vizierate and subsequently member of the Council of State. As Vali of Sivas from 1889 to 1892, he was principally remarkable for his shameless venality and his skill as "agent provocateur" in forwarding the Palace scheme for the creation of an "Armenian Question." Dismissed in 1892, he came to Constantinople, where his Palace influence was not long in procuring him another appointment. At Angora, whither he was sent as Governor-General in December 1893, his record was a little better than it had been at Sivas, despite the fact that he is supposed to have himself fomented the troubles at Youzgat, which led to the dismissal of Abedine Pasha and his own consequent appointment. Two years later he was appointed Minister of the Interior in succession to Khalil Rifaat, who became Grand Vizier on Kiamil Pasha's fall. In his administration of that Department he has not laid himself open to much serious complaint. He is narrow-minded and anti-Christian, but outwardly courteous and correct in his relations towards foreigners. He has, indeed, at times posed as favouring British interests, with the apparent object of uniting all the non-German elements in support of his candidature for the Grand Vizierate, in which it is his ambition to supplant Ferid.

(d.) *Ministers not having Offices at the Porte* (5) [1906] (by Harry H. Lamb).

Sheikh-ul-Islam.

Mehmed Jemal-ed-Din Effendi is one of those upon whose attitude during a crisis very much might depend, but of whom necessarily little is directly known to Europeans, with whom he is not brought into contact. He succeeded to the Sheikh-ul-Islamate in November 1895, having previously been Musteshar of the same Department. He enjoys a high reputation for intelligence, integrity and enlightenment, but very little transpires concerning his real opinions, except through the doubtful medium of his son, Moukhtar Bey, a "modern" young man, who is a member of the Council of State, frequents European society, professes the most advanced Liberal ideas, and fails to inspire confidence.

Minister of War.

Mehmed Riza Pasha, the Seraskier, is another of those upon whose attitude and determination much would necessarily depend in case of disturbances arising on a demise of the Crown. He is the senior member of the Cabinet, having become Seraskier under Kiamil Pasha as far back as 1891, but he is likewise one of those about whom the least is with any degree of certainty to be predicted. Originally raised to his present rank on account of his popularity among the troops, he appears to have retained that popularity, as well as the confidence of the Sultan, who believes that he can safely count on his subserviency.

A Turk of the old school, he was originally a strong Anglophil, but has gradually been gained over to the German party, which is now particularly strong in the higher military ranks—the large fortune, which his relations with Essen have contributed to build up, having no doubt exercised a powerful influence in that direction.

His residence, which is situated within a stone's-throw of Yildiz, is one of the most magnificent and gorgeously furnished houses in Constantinople, and is one of the

very few that are fitted with electric light. Messrs. Siemens and Halske have supplied the installation on terms extremely advantageous to himself. His table, to the pleasures of which he is immoderately addicted, is one of the most copiously and richly-furnished of the capital, and the effects of long years of ease and indulgence are apparent from the enormous girth which he has acquired since he became Seraskier, and which cannot fail to have seriously affected both his physical activity and his moral energy.

With him may be placed—

Grand Master of Artillery.

Mustapha Zekki Pasha, who is also a strong German partisan. Better educated than the Seraskier (who knows no language but Turkish and a few words of Serb), Zekki reads and speaks also French, English, and German. He is, however, of no great intelligence, is vain, pompous, narrow-minded, and enjoys little popularity or consideration.

Minister of Justice.

Abdur Rahman Noureddin Pasha is a contemporary of Saïd Pasha, but is somewhat less decrepit than the President of the Council of State. His father was a certain Hadj Ali Pasha, of Kutahia, and he himself, in his early days, was a protégé of Midhat Pasha's. He saw considerable service in the provinces, having been Governor of Prizrend, the Danube Vilayet, Diarbekir, Angora, and Bagdad. In 1881 he was summoned to Constantinople and appointed member of the Commission on Public Works, in which capacity he opposed the concession to an English Company of a railway in the Euphrates Valley. In 1906 he was one of those Ministers who most persistently opposed the grant of an extension to the Smyrna-Aidin Railway, and between those two dates the keynote of his conduct may be said to have been obstinate and unreasoning opposition to everything (and its name is legion) of which he has failed to comprehend the advantages.

He was appointed Grand Vizier in 1882, when Kutchuk Saïd was dismissed for the second time, on account of difficulties connected with the Russian War Indemnity. He thereby established his right to the title of "Highness," but had no time to effect anything else of importance, since in less than three months Saïd was reinstated, while Abdur Rahman was sent as Vali to Smyrna and subsequently to Adrianople. He was appointed Minister of Justice and Public Worship in November 1895.

Abdul [*sic*] Rahman is a typical old Turk of the severer kind, a strict Mussulman and strongly anti-European, albeit correct and polite in his intercourse with foreigners, and taking a keen, if not very intelligent, interest in foreign politics. He has always enjoyed the reputation of being strictly honest in respect to money matters, but has laid himself open to the accusation of gross favouritism and is a good hater. He is on particularly bad terms with both the present Grand Vizier and İzzet Pasha. His son, Aarif Hikmet Pasha, was married last year to a daughter of the Sultan and was recently the recipient of a valuable electrical Concession, which, however, was suspended in consequence of the Grand Vizier's and others' opposition.

Minister of the Evkaf.

Turkhan Pasha, like the Minister for Foreign Affairs, is an Albanian and aged about 64, being a son of a Notable of Premeti, named Yahya Bey, and having been born at Trikali in 1842. He might adequately be described in three words as "Tewfik-and-water," being also an amiable, kind-hearted old gentleman, of prepossessing appearance, tall, elegant, and refined, but possessing less capacity for business, power of resistance or skill in avoiding difficulties than Tewfik Pasha, like whom, however, he has passed a considerable portion of his life in the Diplomatic Service. Commencing as Secretary in succession at St. Petersburg, Berlin, Athens, Vienna, and Rome, he was Chargé d'Affaires at the latter place in 1879, but fell into disgrace through his

brother being one of the deputies of the Albanian League, who commenced their European tour by a visit to Italy in that year.

After having been Mutessarif at Adalia (1880) and Ourfa (1886), he re-entered the Diplomatic Service about 1887 as Minister to Madrid, represented Turkey at the International Sanitary Conference at Paris in 1891, and was on the point of being named Ambassador to France, when he was suddenly called to succeed Mahmoud Jelalleddin Pasha as Governor of Crete, where he remained until March 1895. Two months later he was named Minister for Foreign Affairs (8th June, 1895), but resigned in October of the same year, having proved himself quite incompetent for the post. Saïd Pasha indeed, who was at that time Grand Vizier and who was always impatient of mediocrity, described his Minister for Foreign Affairs as being "the greatest booby he had encountered in forty years of the public service," but this did not prevent him from being proposed for the post of Ambassador successively to Berlin and London in November 1895. Though we did not approve the appointment, the German Government appears, on the contrary, to have welcomed it and even to have expressed chagrin when it was ultimately not effected.

Turkhan Pasha was President of the abortive Commission for Armenian Reforms, and was appointed a member of the Civil Section of the Council of State in January 1897. In the following year he was sent on a special mission to Livadia for the purpose of conveying to the Czar the insignia of the "Hanedan-i-Aal-i-Osman," and in 1900 he again visited Livadia on a complimentary mission to the Czar. He represented Turkey at the Peace Conference at The Hague in 1899 at the funeral of Her late Majesty Queen Victoria in 1901, and the Coronation of 1902, and was appointed to his present post on the retirement of Ghalib Pasha in September 1904.

Director-General of Customs.

Hassan Fehmi Pasha was originally a lawyer and became the President of the Chamber of Deputies during the abortive attempt at Parliamentary Government at the beginning of the present reign, at which time he had already attained the rank of Vizier. On the indefinite prorogation of the Chambers he became in succession Minister of Justice, Minister of Public Works, and Director-General of Customs.

In 1886 he was sent to England on a special mission in connection with the affairs of Egypt, and although his mission was not productive of any great result, I believe that he personally produced a favourable impression in London and carried away pleasant recollections of the reception accorded to him. He was also sent to Rome to represent the Sultan at the silver wedding festivities of King Umberto.

In June 1893 he was appointed Vali of Smyrna in succession to Abdur Rahman Pasha, and in November 1895 was transferred in a similar capacity to Salonica, where, however, he remained barely a month, being nominated to the Vilayet of Aleppo on the 21st December, and summoned to Constantinople on the 27th to resume his former duties as Director-General of Customs. In March 1897 he was named President of the Special Court of Inquiry into the massacres of Tokat, and in October of the same year was appointed President of the Board of Audit. In March 1902 he was again sent to Salonica as Governor-General, in succession to Tewfik Bey, and remained until October 1904, when he was once more summoned to Constantinople to take up for the third time the post which he now holds. His departure from Salonica on this occasion was marked by a general demonstration of popularity and regret, which was thoroughly deserved. The principal reason for his removal had been the hostility of the military commandant, Haïri Pasha, and the other fanatical ultra-military elements, aroused by his courageous efforts to check the excesses then being committed by the soldiery in the Salonica district.

Hassan Fehmi Pasha is a most amiable and agreeable old gentleman, intelligent and well-educated, knowing both French and English and remarkable for his open-minded impartiality and conciliatory disposition. In whatever position he has occupied, his conduct has invariably been liberal, progressive, and popular.

Minister of Mines, Forests, and Agriculture.

Selim Pasha Melhamé, son of a Maronite or Melchite money-changer at Beirout, came as a young man to Constantinople, where he obtained subaltern employment in various public offices. Naturally clever, ambitious, and unscrupulous, he was not slow to discover that the surest road to advancement lay through the Palace, and he consequently lost no time in enrolling himself in the corps of "Journalists," or purveyors of secret intelligence to His Majesty. His first service of any note was as Secretary to the Eastern Roumelian Boundary Commission about 1879, at which time he was already noted as possessing considerable influence about the Palace. He was a candidate for the post of Governor-General of the Lebanon in 1892, entered the service of the Ottoman Public Debt, from which he was summarily dismissed by Sir Vincent Caillard, and was appointed Minister of Mines and Forests in February 1893. He was one of the Commissioners for the negotiation of the new Treaties of Commerce in April 1896, and in the following year was again candidate for the Governorship of the Lebanon, for which, however, his birth and connections, even more than his character, would have rendered him sovereignly unfit.

As Minister of Mines he has succeeded, with consummate cleverness, for more than thirteen years, in keeping the entire mineral wealth of Turkey practically under his own control. Under the specious pretence of "preserving the natural resources of the country to the natives of the soil," and "preventing Turkey from becoming a second Transvaal, over-run, exhausted, and finally absorbed by foreign adventurers possessing no really permanent interest in the land or its people," he has arrested the natural development of the immense mineral resources of the country, while amassing very considerable fortunes for himself and the limited number of persons who have known how to identify their interests with his own.

In private life he has the appearance of a "brave bourgeois," homely, kind-hearted, domesticated, and extremely hospitable, and he is one of the very few Ottoman functionaries who are still permitted practically unrestricted intercourse with Europeans.

His brother, *Nedjib Pasha Melhamé*, who has come into special prominence since the Sultan intrusted to him the conduct of the inquiry into the attempt on his life on the 21st July, 1905, is officially only Under-Secretary at the Ministry of Public Works, but is better known as unofficial Head of the Secret Police and Special Political Envoy of the Sultan. When his elder brother Selim came from Syria to Constantinople, Nedjib went to Tunis, where he embarked on a double career of commerce and journalism, becoming editor of a paper which had a wide circulation in the East, and was, amongst other peculiarities, strongly anti-English. While in Tunis he was frequently before the Courts, being three times convicted of assault and battery ("coups et blessures") and narrowly escaping a conviction for fraudulent commercial transactions ("escroquerie"). He incurred the violent animosity of the French Resident, Millet, and was eventually compelled to quit the country. Joining his brother Selim in Constantinople, he shortly succeeded in persuading the Sultan that he, and not Munir, was the man needed to deal with the noisy and obstreperous "Young Turks" in Paris and obtain the suppression of their organ, the "Meshveret." He accordingly got himself named "Conseiller d'Ambassade" at the French capital in July 1897.

M. Hanotaux marked his indignation at this appointment by refusing, shortly afterwards, to accept him as Chargé d'Affaires in the temporary absence of Munir Bey. He was also accused of illicit traffic in decorations, and was consequently transferred, after little more than a year, as Imperial Commissioner to Bulgaria. M. Stoiloff, on the strength of reports received from Paris, entered a remonstrance against this nomination, but was compelled to yield to the Sultan's insistence. Nedjib accordingly arrived in Sophia in October, 1898, but the French Representative there refused to return his call, and was indeed formally instructed to enter into no relations with him, either official or social. An idea of his methods and of the degree of their success

may be formed from a despatch written by Sir Francis Elliot in the following May, in which he reports that Prince Ferdinand had complained to him, with much indignation, of the extensive spy system maintained by the Ottoman Commissioner throughout Bulgaria, and of his endeavours to excite dissatisfaction amongst the Mussulmans of the Principality, whom he was impelling to emigrate in considerable numbers. It was already remarked that he had the command of large sums of money, his style of living contrasting strongly with that of his predecessors. His relations with the Prince and the Government continued to become more and more strained. In 1901 Sir Francis Elliot reported that M. Daneff declined to have any but purely formal intercourse with him, and invitations to a dinner, issued by him in the summer of that year, were declined by all the Ministers without exception. His removal, therefore, in January 1902, "was felt as a relief by Prince and Government, with whom he tried to carry things with a high hand, and by the foreign Representatives, who found association with him peculiarly distasteful to them, owing both to his past reputation and to the nature of the services by which he had gained high favour at Yildiz as one of the most trusted of the Sultan's spies" (Sir F. Elliot).

He continued naturally to render services of the same nature after his appointment to the Under-Secretaryship at the Ministry of Public Works, and rendered them indeed so greatly to the Sultan's satisfaction that he gradually attained to the position of a sort of arbiter, to whom His Majesty referred for investigation, and control of the whole mass of absurd and often contradictory reports furnished to him daily by his ordinary "Journalists." In this capacity, I believe, Nedjib Melhamé has frequently done good service by exposing the absurdity of many of these reports, diverting suspicion from innocent persons and opening the Sultan's eyes to the unreliable nature of the great majority of their compilers.

But Nedjib's crowning opportunity came, as before mentioned, on the 21st July, 1905, when the Sultan, incensed and alarmed at the nonsensical and unpractical theories and suggestions advanced by his *entourage* and the first Commissions appointed by him to inquire into the bomb outrage at Yildiz, at last decided on giving him *carte blanche* and intrusting him with the entire conduct of the investigation. The result entirely justified his decision, for the inquiry instituted by the Commission under Nedjib Bey's presidency, conducted with remarkable patience and perspicacity and without resort to the unjustifiable methods which so frequently constitute a blot on criminal prosecutions in this country, led to a complete exposure of the plot and to the condemnation of some twenty-seven persons, as to all of whose complicity in the crime there seems little reason for doubt.

Nedjib's zeal and success were rewarded with the rank of Vizier, carrying with it the title of Pasha, and the appointment as "Ghidish Mamourou," the holder of which is directly responsible for the safety of the Sovereign whenever (*i.e.*, three times in the course of each year) he issues forth beyond the immediate precincts of Yildiz—a post obviously involving the greatest confidence and carrying with it the most extensive powers. That such powers should have been intrusted to a Syrian Christian is in itself enough to excite against the holder of them an enormous amount of jealousy and ill-will, and it is proof of considerable courage in the man that he should have aspired to wield them. Nor, so far as is known, have they been greatly abused. Compared with that of most of his predecessors and rivals his conduct has been marked by moderation and good sense, and in his relations with Europeans, with whom, like his brother Selim, he is also permitted to hold practically unrestrained intercourse, there is apparent a desire and effort to live down his past unsatisfactory reputation. Since Nedjib returned to Constantinople, a certain jealousy has sprung up between the two brothers, whose methods approach too closely to one another, culminating in an apparent breach, for though continuing to occupy adjacent houses they are not ostensibly on speaking terms; but an element of policy and calculation is suspected in this coolness, which offers obvious advantages.

Ex-Grand Viziers.

Saïd Pasha, called "Kutchuk (or Little) Saïd," to distinguish him from "Kurd Saïd," the present President of the Council of State, was born at Erzeroum, though his father was a native of Angora. He began his public career as Turkish editor of the "*Jeridé-i-Havadis*," a newspaper issued in Constantinople and owned by an Englishman named Churchill. He subsequently entered the Ministry of the Interior, where he became Secretary-General, passing from there in a similar capacity to the Grand Vizierate. Shortly after the accession of Abdul Hamid to the throne he was appointed, on the recommendation of his brother-in-law, Mehmed Jelalleddin Pasha, to the post of First Secretary to His Majesty.

Being a man of great energy and ambition, it was largely due to his suggestion and impulse that Abdul Hamid, who at the commencement of his reign was undecided whether to incline towards a frankly constitutional or a reactionary form of Government, decided on adopting that policy of centralization, which has ended in the complete stultification of the Sublime Porte and the concentration of the entire work of the Administration in his own hands. Saïd himself was not long in foreseeing the disastrous consequences of such a policy, and he was destined eventually to sacrifice his own career in a vain endeavour to arrest it.

After four years of the First Secretaryship, Saïd was made Minister, first of the Civil List and then of the Interior; but being on bad terms with Safvet Pasha, who became Grand Vizier in 1877, he obtained the post of Vali of Broussa, whence he was recalled after a few months to assume the position of Prime Minister himself.

He was indeed three times "Premier Ministre" during the period when Abdul Hamid amused himself by playing at Constitutional Government, viz., for periods of seven, eight, and four months respectively between 1878 and 1880, and as often Grand Vizier, viz., 1882-1885, 1901-1903, and for four months in 1895.

Though he has been living for the past three or four years in the strictest possible retirement, Saïd Pasha is still regarded by many as the only man living who might yet be capable of regenerating the Administration of the country, to the defects of which and consequent dangers he is more than all others alive. He is a sincere patriot, a man of superior intelligence, considerable learning, and an independence of character which would be sought for in vain amongst the Turkish officials of the present day. At the outset of his career he professed strong Anglophil proclivities and he was on terms of the most friendly intimacy with Lord Dufferin, but he either modified his views during the sixteen years that intervened between his first and third tenures of the Grand Vizierate, or else he allowed the natural and traditional sentiment of deference to the opinions of the Sovereign to influence him so far that in the latter portion of his career he was frequently represented as a Russian partisan. It is, however, most reasonable to suppose that he was guided neither by love of nor by enmity towards England in itself, but merely by what he considered most conducive to the welfare of his country. So long as he believed that the interests of Turkey could best be served by cultivating English sympathies he followed an Anglophil policy; but when, after 1896, he came to the conclusion that England's protection and assistance were no longer to be relied on, he began to lean towards an understanding with Russia.

His greatest fault was perhaps a lack of patience and suavity in his relations towards his Imperial master, his *entourage* and his own colleagues in the Council of Ministers, for the large majority of whom he entertained a sincere and undisguised contempt. By his uncompromising attitude he more than once forced on a crisis and was driven into resignation, when it is possible that by more delicate handling he might have been able to establish a *modus vivendi* with the Sultan and, to a certain extent at least, influence his policy for good. He wished, however, to be the Oriental Bismarck, and would not consent to carry out a policy which he did not himself direct. If it must be admitted that his resignations were almost always upon questions of first-class importance, that may also be due in great part to the fact that the Sultan, who at heart distrusted and disliked him, never had recourse to his assistance save when the state of affairs was critical and beyond the capacity of his other Ministers to

cope with. Thus in 1880 Saïd resigned because he failed to persuade the Sultan to recognize the necessity of yielding to the Concert of Europe in the matter of Dulcigno; in 1885 because, on the contrary, he could not induce the Sultan to take his stand upon the letter of the Berlin Treaty and risk the disapproval of Europe by marching his armies into Eastern Roumelia; while in 1903 the reason of his resignation was again his inability to convince the Sultan of the necessity of forestalling the demands of the Powers by introducing material reforms into the administration of the European provinces.

Some interesting particulars concerning Saïd Pasha are contained in Memoranda of Mr. Block's, which were sent home in despatches from this Embassy, No. 147, Confidential, of the 20th November, 1901; and No. 22, Confidential, of the 13th January, 1903.

The circumstances connected with his flight to the British Embassy in 1895, when he believed that the Sultan contemplated his exile, and probably his death, are recounted in Sir Philip Currie's despatches Nos. 918 and 919 of the 10th and 11th December of that year.

Kiamil Pasha, aged 79, is a native of Cyprus, originally of Jewish extraction, and is probably, after Kutçuk Saïd, the nearest approach to a statesman yet remaining in Turkey. He is a man of considerable education, speaking Greek, German, and English, as well as French, and has always enjoyed a high reputation for ability, honesty, and determination. He was Ottoman Delegate for the settlement of the Jeddah massacre indemnities; became Vali of Aleppo, from which post he was removed in consequence of the representations of Mr. Consul Henderson, though Consul-General Eldridge, on the contrary, reported favourably of him; was made Minister of Evkaf in 1880, and Grand Vizier in 1884. He was reappointed to that office in October, 1895, but, like Kutçuk Saïd, who had immediately preceded him, he refused to accept the position of relative insignificance to which the office of Grand Vizier had been reduced during Jevad Pasha's tenure and was consequently dismissed on the 6th November, after a heated debate in a special Council of Ministers at the Palace, followed by a violent altercation with the Sultan himself, an interesting account of which is contained in Sir Philip Currie's despatch to Lord Salisbury No. 797 of the 13th November, 1895. The Sultan accused him of revolutionary designs, called him a traitor, and ordered him to be exiled to Aleppo. Indeed, it is probable that only the active intervention of several foreign Ambassadors saved his life from being sacrificed to the jealous fury of the Sultan, and he was eventually sent as Vali to Smyrna, where he still remains.

His administration of this important province during the past eleven years has been consistently creditable, the only blemish upon it being the misplaced confidence which he appears to repose in his son Saïd and his son-in-law Faik Pasha, both of whom are corrupt and unscrupulous to the last degree. The former, who is nominally in the navy, attained the rank of Rear-Admiral, with the title of Pasha, on account of the activity which he displayed in connection with the discovery of bombs at Smyrna in August 1905. He is also one of the principal agents of the Palace in the conduct of the Pan-Islamic and anti-English agitation in Egypt.

Kiamil Pasha was suddenly dismissed and ordered to go and reside in Rhodes on the 12th January, 1907. On the following day he took refuge in the British Consulate.

(e.) *Events at Constantinople in 1907.*

Extract from the Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1907.⁽¹⁾

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir N. O'Connor, No. 21 of January 13, 1908, F.O. 4526/4526/08/44. R. February 10, 1908.)

106. There has been no recurrence in an acute form of the Sultan's illness, though His Majesty shows signs of weakness, and often looks fatigued.

107. During the year there have been two changes in the Council of Ministers—

⁽¹⁾ [The extracts here from the Annual Report of 1907 are added to complete the picture of government at the capital in 1906.]

Hassan Fehmi Pasha replacing Saïd Pasha, who died last October, as President of the Council of State; and Admiral Hassan Rahmi Pasha being appointed Minister of Marine in place of Jellal Pasha. Hassan Fehmi Pasha has been succeeded by Raïf Pasha as Director-General of the Customs. Saïd Pasha, an account of whose personality was given in the Annual Report for 1906, was a consistent friend of England, and his loss is much felt by the Embassy. Hassan Fehmi Pasha, who is also mentioned in the last Annual Report, has done his best, in the face of great difficulties, to second the Embassy's efforts to bring about an improvement in the Customs administration. Admiral Hassan Rahmi Pasha commanded the squadron of useless ships sent to the Dardanelles as a naval demonstration at the time of the war with Greece. As already mentioned, he has served five years in the British navy. He is married to a German lady. Raïf Pasha's appointment as Director-General of the Customs is a good one. Though over 70, he is still very active minded and intelligent. He is, moreover, honest and straightforward. At one time Midhat Pasha's private secretary, he was for long kept in semi-exile because of his connection with that statesman. He has already twice held his present post.

108. The year has witnessed the fall and banishment of Fehim Pasha, the notorious and dreaded Head of the Secret Police in Constantinople. The circumstances of his fall are of interest. Fehim Pasha had long been the terror of the native population of the capital. Robber, blackmailer, murderer, this ruffian, as the son of the Sultan's late foster brother and as the official charged with the care of His Majesty's personal safety, had always enjoyed the Imperial favour in a special degree, and had hitherto pursued his criminal career with impunity. It was his high-handed action in seizing a ship carrying cargo belonging to a German subject which led to his fall last winter. Germany has never been popular in Turkey except with the Sultan and the corrupt camarilla which surrounds him. The precarious state of His Majesty's health could not but give rise to misgivings as to the continuance of German influence, and Baron von Marschall knew that, if he succeeded in ridding the capital of so detested a scoundrel as Fehim Pasha, it would do much to counteract the country's dislike of Germans and German policy. He accordingly took the matter up with the utmost vigour, demanding the severe and immediate punishment of what he characterized as "an act of brigandage committed by Fehim Pasha, personal aide-de-camp of His Majesty the Sultan." For some weeks the Sultan stood firm, refusing to part with his favourite, and there seemed good reason to fear that the German Ambassador, if left to fight the matter single-handed, might fail. Baron Marschall's position, indeed, appeared to be seriously compromised, the more so as his Government, yielding to the personal appeal of the Sultan, had agreed to waive the demand for Fehim Pasha's punishment, and had expressed their willingness to be content with his removal from Constantinople. There was no doubt that Baron von Marschall had with him the sympathy of all classes in Constantinople, and in particular of the two immediate heirs to the throne, whose lives were rendered precarious and miserable by Fehim Pasha. These latter would be placed under a deep personal obligation to him if he succeeded in gaining his point. In the circumstances it seemed to me desirable that I should associate myself with my German colleague. I had in my possession a letter addressed by Fehim Pasha, who described himself as "*Aide de camp particulier de Sa Majesté Impériale*" to a British subject threatening him with death if he did not immediately pay him a sum of £ T. 700 which he claimed. With this proof of Fehim Pasha's villainy in my hands, and anxious as I was to come to the German Ambassador's support in a case which was of supreme interest to the next heir to the throne, as well as to some of the high officials, I asked for an audience of the Sultan, and showing His Majesty the letter, of which he immediately took a copy, implored him not to shelter a man who for a miserable sum of a few hundred pounds had dishonoured the service of his Sovereign. My action clinched the matter. The Sultan after long discussion promised to see justice done, and on the following day—three weeks after the incident of the seizure of the ship—Fehim Pasha was sent off to Broussa.

109. In the provinces there have been numerous changes of Valis, which will, when called for, be mentioned in their proper place; but there is one which should be recorded here, owing to the interest aroused in the capital by the sensational circumstances connected with it. I refer to the case of Kiamil Pasha, who was summarily dismissed last January from his post of Vali of the Vilayet of Aidin, and ordered to reside in Rhodes. Since Kiamil Pasha's fall as Grand Vizier in 1895, when he was only saved from exile and possibly death by the intervention of some of the foreign Embassies, he had occupied the post of Vali of Aidin. His administration of that province had been consistently creditable, and his dismissal, though ostensibly based on maladministration, was due in great part to the enmity of the Grand Vizier, who feared him as a possible rival. On receiving his orders to proceed to Rhodes he took refuge at the British Consulate-General at Smyrna, whence he telegraphed an appeal to the Sultan to be allowed to spend the closing years of his life in Cyprus, his native island. His Majesty replied that he might come to Constantinople, and that if he did so a house would be provided for him. This offer Kiamil Pasha was ready to accept provided assurances were given to His Majesty's Embassy that if he came he would be free from molestation. Mr. Barclay, who was in charge of the Embassy during these delicate negotiations, which he conducted with singular tact and ability, made every effort to obtain the required assurances, without which, as he caused the Sultan to be informed, he could not advise Kiamil Pasha to leave the shelter of the Consulate-General. For some days no reply was vouchsafed by His Majesty, who was in constant communication with Kiamil Pasha, and hoped to be able to induce his Highness to leave British asylum without being compelled to make promises on his behalf to a foreign Embassy. In the end it was only the departure from the Golden Horn of His Majesty's ship "Imogene," which was due at Lemnos for paying off a few days later, but which the Sultan doubtless feared was bound for Smyrna, which led to the desired assurances being given. On learning that the Embassy had formally taken act of His Majesty's assurances, Kiamil Pasha left the Consulate-General and embarked for Constantinople, where he has since resided unmolested.

110. Last winter Constantinople was the scene of negotiations between Bulgaria and the Porte which led to the conclusion of a new Commercial Agreement in January, clearly defining the few articles which, on the one side or the other, are subject to duty. Subsequently there were further negotiations between the two countries regarding a number of long-pending questions, and an understanding was arrived at in July as to conditions of nationality, extradition, the position of Muftis in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia, and on the rights and attributions of the commercial agents in both countries. There was, however, a further point on which it has been found impossible to come to an agreement, Turkey refusing to consent to the junction of the Turkish and Bulgarian railway systems via Kustendil, Devebair, and Kumanova. The ratification of the Agreements on the other points is withheld by Bulgaria pending Turkey's consent to the railway project. There have also been negotiations in Constantinople between Turkey and Roumania for the renewal of the Commercial Treaty which expired last year and for a Consular Convention. Agreement was reached, and both Arrangements are ready, but the Porte withholds ratification pending an agreement as to the amount of the indemnity to be paid by Roumania for the settlement of the claims to landed property abandoned by Mussulmans in the Dobruja at the time of the cession of that province to Roumania.

[ED. NOTE.—§§ 111–112. The concluding paragraphs of this section are omitted, as merely dealing with the complimentary visits to Constantinople of an Abyssinian Mission and of Admiral Sir Charles Drury's Naval Squadron.]

(f.) Events at Adrianople in 1907.⁽¹⁾

136. In Adrianople the general failure of the crops has occasioned a heavy deficit in the vilayet's finances, and much misery among the peasantry, to whom the Government has had to advance £T. 50,000 worth of grain; but though this may enable the peasants to tide over the winter, it has left very little over for sowing, so that the economic outlook is a gloomy one. The condition of the vilayet's finances should add weight to the arguments which I have used to the Porte in favour of permission being granted to some, at least, of the 3,000 Bulgarian emigrant families to return, viz., that the depopulation of the Bulgarian villages causes a serious loss of revenue. This and other reasons, such as the danger constituted by the presence on the frontier of a discontented population, and the desirability of winning the confidence of the Bulgarian inhabitants of the province, have been repeatedly laid by Major Samson before the Vali, and by me before the Grand Vizier. Our efforts have unfortunately proved fruitless, and, indeed, the killing of a spy by a small Bulgarian band at Kuchuk Derbend in November, together with the destruction of a similar band at Lijakeui in the same month, by incontrovertibly establishing the presence of Bulgarian bands in the vilayet, have to some extent justified the refusal of the authorities. Their attitude appears to be based on the fear of letting the Bulgarians get a secure footing in the vilayet, in view of the ever present possibility of hostilities with Bulgaria, and on a desire to better the lot of the Turkish peasant at the expense of the Christian. In pursuance of this object the Turkish villagers have been allowed to encroach with impunity on the lands of their Christian neighbours, the sufferers being not only Bulgarians, but Greeks as well. This injustice, which has formed the subject of repeated representations on the part of the Embassy, is no doubt partly responsible for the recent considerable exodus of Bulgarians from the districts to the north and east of Kirk Kilisse, though there is probably some foundation for the official view that this is due to the efforts of emissaries of the Bulgarian Government to persuade the Bulgarian peasants to come and occupy the farms left untenanted by the Greeks who have left Bulgaria. Numbers of these Greeks have passed through the vilayet during the year, and their destitute condition no doubt does much to embitter the animosity between Bulgarians and Greeks. The evidence of the misfortunes of their countrymen fills the resident Greeks with a desire for retaliation, which, as they form a more numerous, wealthier, and more influential class than the Bulgarians, they have many opportunities of satisfying. A striking instance of this has been afforded by the boycott of Bulgarian labour at Xanthi, where the Greeks, taking advantage of the fact that, owing to the partial failure of the tobacco crop in 1906, the factories did not require so many hands as usual, put pressure upon employers to prevent their giving work to Bulgarians, with the result that some 800 of the latter were left without employment. The Greek Metropolitan and Consul seem to have been directing the action of their compatriots in this matter, while the Kaïmakam, a weak man incapable of dealing with the situation, told Major Samson he had no hope of assistance from the Mutessarif of Gumuljina, as the latter was a fellow-countryman of the Metropolitan. There were no disturbances, owing to the moderate attitude of the Bulgarians, but the representations of the Embassy and of His Majesty's Consul at Adrianople failed to obtain the withdrawal of the embargo, though the Kaïmakam of Xanthi was removed from his post. The Greek Consul, who took an active part in fomenting the racial ill-feeling, has also been replaced, and his successor appears to confine himself to spreading Hellenic influence by more legitimate means. Major Samson attributes to this gentleman's good example a certain improvement at the end of the year in the relations between Greeks and Bulgarians. These are still far from cordial, but the peace of the vilayet happily remains unbroken by any display of such murderous activity as obtains in Macedonia. The Greek party is, however, striving to prevent the spread southward

⁽¹⁾ [From the Annual Report for 1907.]

and eastward of Bulgarian influence, and to eradicate such influence from places where it is not too firmly established to render efforts in that direction hopeless. Bulgarian policy appears to be less aggressive, its chief object being the return of the refugees. an end which, as their leaders seem fully to realize, can only be attained by peaceful means.

137. There have been two changes in the past year in the Governorship of Adrianople. Arif Pasha, who was in office at the commencement of the year, applied in February to be relieved of his duties, and as he has great influence at the Palace his request was readily granted; but, although his state of health towards the end of his tenure of office was such as to prevent his giving proper attention to his duties, yet his departure was a loss to the vilayet, the maintenance of order in which was greatly due to his firm attitude. He was succeeded by Reshad Bey, who was so notoriously unfitted for the post that I at once protested against his appointment. The Grand Vizier replied to this protest that he could not prevent the appointment, but that Reshad Bey's unsuitability would be so obvious that he would soon be removed; and, indeed, he was replaced in June by Ziver Bey, who has retained the post since then. Ziver Bey, like his two predecessors, has been in a bad state of health, but has made every effort to attend to the business of the vilayet. He has had very little experience of administrative work, and does not seem to have much ability in that line, but he appears to be conscientious and fairminded, and willing to listen to suggestions.

II. PUBLIC OPINION AND EDUCATION IN TURKEY [1906-7].

(a.) *The Turkish Press and its Influence* (6) [1906] (by G. H. Fitzmaurice).⁽¹⁾

The influence of the press as understood in Western countries may be said to be non-existent in Turkey. In the West the power of the press to direct and mould public opinion on politics, finance, art, &c., has grown until it overshadows the other "estates." In Turkey the rôle of journalism is much more modest. In a country where the people only exist for the highly-centralized theocratic régime of an absolute Monarch, the press, stripped of all vestige of independence and liberty, has been reduced to the position of an organ whose main duties are to propagate the doctrine of blind obedience to the central will of the Sultan Khalif and to extol the manifold blessings of his beneficent rule, especially in its religious aspect.

The Turkish press (*i.e.*, the papers printed in Turkish) is of comparatively recent date, and may be said to have had its origin in a paper called the "*Jeridé-i-Havadis*," started, curiously enough, by an Englishman named Churchill about the time of the Crimean War, and published, it is stated, half in Turkish and half in English. This was followed by attempts to bring out papers in Turkish only, and though many of them had at first a precarious and short-lived existence, a purely Turkish press ultimately struggled into being.

In those days the reading public in Turkey was practically confined to the wealthy and official classes of Constantinople, and the style of the first Turkish papers was very ornate, being, so to speak, richly embroidered with high-flown phrases and expressions borrowed from Persian and Arabic. Under the would-be progressive régime of the Sultans Abdul Mejid and Abdul Aziz, its tone was distinctly liberal and reflected the well-intentioned, though perhaps misdirected, attempts of the Turks of the day to copy the ways of the West. With the accession, however, of Abdul Hamid, the suppression of the Ottoman Parliament and the inauguration of a reactionary and arbitrary system based on anti-Western and Pan-Islamic ideas, the nascent liberties

⁽¹⁾ [From the Annual Report for 1906.]

and scope of the press were curtailed by the increased rigours of the censorship. This process was accentuated *pari passu* with the tightening of the reins of Government and the ruthless merging of all Turkish public life in the personal rule of the present Sovereign, until, in an Empire of over a million square miles, the Turkish press is now practically represented in the capital by some four daily papers drawing their inspiration entirely from Yildiz Kiosk, and in the provinces by a weekly or bi-weekly leaflet edited under the ægis and direct supervision of the local Governor in the chief town of each vilayet.

Up to some fifteen years ago the Turkish papers were allowed to publish leaders and guarded comments on foreign affairs, while criticisms of individual Governors and functionaries, their acts and methods, were not prohibited as long as no direct attack were made on the Government or its policy. Such leading articles and comments, emasculated by the censorship, were of a somewhat pithless and invertebrate nature. They were mostly turgid essays on Balkan politics or eulogies of the Triple Alliance, for the predominant partner of which Abdul Hamid, then as now, had a special predilection. In keeping, however, with the Sultan's general anti-Western idea a Turkish paper in these days once published an article exulting over Japan's successful efforts to rid herself of the remnants of European tutelage, and explaining that there were *a fortiori* reasons for undermining and abolishing that "set of old musty Treaties styled the Capitulations," which constituted an infringement of Turkish sovereign rights. Another article which appeared about the same time dilated on the hostility and bad faith of Great Britain in occupying, and subsequently failing to keep her promises to evacuate, Egypt. But during the last decade and a half the Sultan has deemed it inexpedient any longer to allow this semblance of independent comment, and editors have found themselves obliged to travel beyond Europe, and to search even Patagonia and other such remote quarters of the globe for themes for articles that could in no way be interpreted by the ingenuity of the most suspicious of autocrats as implying even veiled reflections on his system and methods of rule. Eventually even these sources were cut off, and leader-writing in any shape or form was suppressed.

In reviewing the present state and influence of the Ottoman press the semi-official provincial leaflets mentioned above may for all practical purposes be left out of account. It is true that in the comparatively large business centres of Smyrna, Salonica, Beirut, and the Lebanon a number of papers, some of them dailies, are published in Turkish, Greek, French, Arabic, and other languages, but their influence may be said to be a negligible quantity. Owing to the paralyzing effect of the censorship their range of news is confined to chronicling local arrivals and departures, incidents of an innocent kind such as fires, accidents or social gatherings, and to registering the Decrees of the central and local Government, with occasional excursions of a tentative and halting nature into the domains of art, literature, industries, and commerce. They are, in fact, but feeble echoes of their Constantinople contemporaries, from which they quote extensively as a safe method of making good the dearth of local subject matter free from a possibly seditious taint.

In Turkey "reviews," periodicals, &c., are unknown.

The Constantinople press may be divided into three categories: (1) the four daily Turkish papers mentioned above; (2) half-a-dozen weekly, fortnightly, or monthly journals, published as the official organs or gazettes of the Ministry of War, the Ministry of Marine, Ministry of Justice, the Imperial Ottoman School of Medicine, and the Ottoman Chamber of Commerce, together with one illustrated paper and a "Ladies' Journal" for Turkish women; (3) about a dozen non-Turkish daily papers, of which five in Greek, a couple in Armenian, one purely in French, and two, the "Levant Herald" and "Moniteur Oriental" in English and French, and one lately established in Italian and French. All these latter suffer from the same disabilities as the Turkish press, *i.e.*, they are forced to eschew all comment on internal or foreign politics, and have practically to restrict their printed matter to garbled versions of the agency telegrams, to recording the movements of and entertainments given by foreign Embassies or local notabilities, to items of gossip concerning their respective

communities and harmless topics, such as the state of the weather and the crops, with carefully expurgated extracts from the European press to fill the gaps caused by the exigencies of the censor. Twice a-year, on the occasions of the Sultan's birthday and accession day, these non-Turkish papers are privileged, or rather compelled, to write leaders joining in the chorus of praise and flattery offered up by their Turkish contemporaries at the foot of the throne of the Sovereign, the virtues, exploits, and untold benefits of whose Hamidian régime are lauded in language as fantastic as it is amusing. These panegyrics are curious specimens of journalistic literature. They have a hollow note of jubilation and sound like a classical pæan or translations of cuneiform inscriptions recording the triumphs of the ancient Persian and Assyrian Monarchs. They would indeed more fittingly adorn a museum library than the pages of a modern newspaper.

It is not difficult to see that the influence, in the Western notion of the term, of this non-Turkish press in Constantinople is infinitesimal. The same may be said of the influence of the second category. For the organs of the Ministries of War, Marine, &c., simply register the decorations conferred on officers and officials, promotions and transfers of the same, and Government decisions on unimportant service matters, all free discussion of military, &c., topics, or reference to progressive inventions being rigorously excluded.

The "Ladies' Journal" is a weekly leaflet of some two pages of printed matter free from any allusion to politics or such subjects as women's rights, female suffrage, or others of the kind. It consists mostly of homilies on the domestic duties and virtues of Moslem women, with innocent if not puerile stories illustrative of the necessity for strict attendance to household occupations and cares. A recent number of the "Ladies' Journal" has published an article demonstrating that the great successes of Japan are due to the discrimination shown by her in imitating or adopting only what she judged to be useful in Western civilization, while carefully adhering to the essentials of her own national life, and that the Japanese women by refraining from copying the fashions and social habits of their Western sisters had powerfully contributed to the success of this policy. In fact, the general tendency of the Turkish "Ladies' Journal" is to inculcate the superiority from a national and religious point of view of the simplicity and seclusion of the lives of Moslem women, as compared with the greater freedom of the West.

There remain the four Constantinople daily papers in Turkish which constitute the entire Turkish press in as far as it may be said to have any influence within the Ottoman Empire or beyond its confines. Their names are the "Sabah" or "Morning," the "Sa'adet" or "Prosperity," the "Ikdam" or "Persevering Effort," and the "Terjuman-i-Hakikat" or "Interpreter of Truth," the high-sounding titles of the last three sounding almost facetious. They are halfpenny papers and their circulation is some 7,000 copies in the capital and 2,000 in the provinces for the "Ikdam," some 5,000 copies in the capital and 1,500 in the provinces for the "Sabah," while the "Sa'adet" and the "Terjuman-i-Hakikat" run only to about 1,000 copies each in the capital and provinces combined.

To gauge their importance and influence it may be well to examine somewhat in detail their attributions and limitations. As stated above, all their attempts to publish leaders and independent comments on internal or foreign politics have been sternly crushed by a grinding censorship, and the papers are now practically edited from Yildiz Kiosk, from which, moreover, they derive subventions, the "Ikdam," "Sa'adet," and "Sabah" each receiving £T. 600 a-year and the "Terjuman-i-Hakikat" the more liberal allowance of £T. 1,440. The disparity between the latter amount and the subsidies granted to the other three is the outcome of the Sultan's or rather Khalif's delight at a clever rejoinder from the pen of its editor to an attack on Islam which appeared in a foreign newspaper some years ago. Abdul Hamid at once issued an Iradé ordering the "Terjuman-i-Hakikat's" yearly stipend of £T. 360 to be increased by £T. 1,080, and the incident is indicative of the Pan-Islamic proclivities of the present ruler of Turkey.

Apart from the free discussion of topics having the faintest bearing on internal politics being restricted, a whole host of expressions and words have been put on the "index." All such words as "revolution," "popular movement," "strikes," "tyranny," "dynastic changes," "freedom of speech," and thousands such, are considered rank sedition. In fact, the ever-increasing exactions in this respect of the censorship must seriously curtail the resources of the Turkish vocabulary and hamper the style of Turkish editors, whose ingenuity is moreover severely taxed to avoid the innumerable pitfalls of the Turkish literature of the Hamidian era.

Some years ago, when a certain latitude was still allowed, Turkish papers at times showed signs of restiveness, which were, however, promptly checked by punishment in the shape of fines, suspension, or the exile of recalcitrant editors. At present all drafts of printed matter, even advertisements, have to be submitted to the Censor before being sent to press, and the proprietors and editors of papers are so crushed in spirit that suspension or suppression is practically unheard of. It is needless to remark that the Turkish newspapers have practically no capital. They are not run as business concerns and have no correspondents abroad nor in the Ottoman provincial towns. A foreign Diplomatist in Turkey runs no risk of having to grant embarrassing interviews to the correspondent of the "İkdam." All this, however, does not prevent them somewhat pathetically styling themselves as "Journal politique, économique et littéraire," after the fashion of their important continental contemporaries.

The contents of a Constantinople Turkish daily consist mainly of the Official Gazette recording Government Decrees and Regulations together with a usually long list of decorations and promotions in civil or military rank conferred by a gracious Sovereign; detailed lists of voluntary subscriptions for the Mecca water supply, the Hedjaz Railway or some such religious enterprise patronized by His Majesty; lengthy and most grandiloquent accounts of the Sovereign's generosity in endowing or repairing fountains, schools, mosques, &c.; flattering references to his unceasing efforts to stimulate the progress and development of the country, coupled with eulogies of his paternal solicitude for the prosperity and welfare of all classes of his "faithful subjects, without distinction of race or creed," and innocuous descriptions of accidents or incidents of the daily life in the capital.

In the way of foreign news they supply distorted translations of telegrams concerning the outside world received by Reuter and other telegram agencies, garbled extracts from the foreign press carefully chosen to suit the views of Yildiz and doctored versions of the speeches of European statesmen, of whom the Germans are at present specially favoured.

But perhaps the most interesting and significant characteristic of Turkish papers is the zeal they manifest in printing all items of news affecting Islam, with highly-coloured accounts of the strides it is believed by the Turks to be making "under the auspices of the Khalif" in countries like Japan, China, the Philippines, India, and various parts of Africa. This side of the Turkish press is undoubtedly the most important and the one which enables it to exercise its greatest influence. Turkish journalism has no pretensions to influence the press or public opinion in foreign countries, while anything like a press war between Turkey and another country is almost inconceivable. Its past trials and present prostrate condition might seem at first sight to indicate also its utter powerlessness to influence affairs or opinions within the Ottoman Empire, yet, paradoxical as it may sound, its influence in Turkey proper and in the world of Islam generally is very considerable. Such influence is partly negative, as the press is so controlled by the Sultan as to prevent its becoming the medium for its subjects to acquire an appetite for liberal institutions, which, he believes, would be disruptive of the autocratic power of the Sultanate and Khalifate, essential for binding together the heterogeneous elements composing the Moslem population in Turkey. Apart from this negative side, the tone and trend of Turkish papers is to intensify the hold of the Sovereign and Khalif on the imaginations of the "true believers," especially the lower classes, even in outlying districts of his extensive dominions, thus indirectly increasing the influence and prestige of the Central Ottoman

Government among non-Ottoman tribes and nationalities, such as Kurds, Arabs, Albanians, &c.

In the reigns of the Sultans Abdul Medjid and Abdul Aziz the reading public was confined, as stated above, to the well-to-do classes in the capital; but Abdul Hamid, as part of his Pan-Islamic policy of strengthening the Mahommedans and raising them to the intellectual level of the Christians, has, since his accession, exerted himself untiringly to spread education, non-liberal and narrow in type though it be, among his coreligionists. The result has been that a large percentage of the poorer classes of Moslems can now read and write; and in a country like Turkey, where the people have a natural bent for political discussion after their own Oriental fashion and where literature in the ordinary sense of the word does not exist, the newspapers which replace such literature are eagerly scanned by the natives for gleanings or scraps of political information. The daily circulation of a Turkish paper is no criterion of the area of population which its news reaches, for the majority of Turks spend some time every day in the cafés, where the papers are read and passed round, the news afterwards travelling from mouth to mouth in that silent manner which has often surprised and puzzled Europeans. In reply to the remark that European Governments cannot disregard public opinion as reflected in the press, platform utterances, &c., the Sultan is reported to have said that he had a much more dangerous and insidious form of public opinion to contend with in "the news that passed from ear to ear." The items of news and views, especially those concerning Islam, which are inspired by Yildiz and published in the Turkish papers, percolate to the extremities of the Ottoman Empire; and in this way the press, reduced to a state of complete subserviency, is used by Abdul Hamid as a subtle instrument for imbuing his Moslem subjects with his spirit and ideas in the shape and form most calculated to harmonize with his personal and theocratic rule with its anti-Western bias. In this latter connection it is to be noted that the Turkish papers display a special eagerness to publish extracts from the European press concerning international discord or rivalries between Christian Powers. They themselves, those who inspire them, and the people for whose consumption they are written, seem to gloat over the possibility of strife, whether in the shape of actual warfare, a war of tariffs, or press polemics between non-Mahommedan countries. This policy, carefully directed from head-quarters, is no doubt intended to foster and accentuate the deep-rooted and secret antagonism of the Mahommedan Turk towards everything Western and Christian—an effect which it undoubtedly produces.

Outside the confines of the Ottoman Empire the Turkish press exercises a considerable influence among the Moslem population of Russia, Afghanistan, India, Egypt, and North Africa. Its news, especially of a religious nature, is translated and quoted in the Mahommedan organs in those countries where Ottoman Consuls or other Pan-Islamic agents take in the Turkish papers and make it their business to have circulated among their coreligionists living in "infidel" lands anything of interest concerning Stamboul and its Khalif. It is not hard to realize how the Constantinople press published in the vernacular and manipulated by Yildiz has thus become a powerful though invisible medium for transmitting the Pan-Islamic current to distant Mahommedan communities. The long string, usually occupying several lines, of high-sounding titles with which the Sultan's name is invariably ushered in by the Turkish newspapers may well recall to us the mirage effects of the East; while the encomiums similarly heaped on the Khalif as patron of justice, learning, literature, art, war, &c., must sound hollow, if not ridiculous, to our Western ears; but to pious Moslems inside and outside of Turkey they have a ring of reality and serve to magnify the spiritual prestige of Abdul Hamid, the Victorious, the Commander of the Faithful, the Lord of the two Continents and two Oceans, &c. In Islam no divorce has yet taken place between Church and State. The two are inextricably intertwined. In fact, the religious overshadows the political side, so that the seemingly mediæval, religious character of the Turkish press has really a far-reaching political effect and influence.

The Turkish press, then, makes no claim or pretence to influence the politics and

public opinion of Western countries. At home it is powerless to influence the Turkish Government and its retrograde methods of administration, but, as a docile and servile instrument in the hands of the Sultan, who is both the absolute Ruler of Turkey and supreme pontiff of Islam, it is a potent agency for consolidating and strengthening the prestige of the Central Government, while infusing the whole "world of Islam" with a sense of cohesion and community of interest calculated to make them rally round the Khalifate in moments of stress or emergency.

G. H. FITZMAURICE.

(b.) *Education* [1907].⁽¹⁾

54. The absence of official statistics in this, as in most other branches of purely Turkish administration, forms one of the chief obstacles to an accurate survey of education in Turkey. The Ministry of Public Instruction has not published a Year Book since 1900. Education in Turkey is, in theory, compulsory, and parents neglecting to send their children to school are liable to be fined. Hitherto no such fine has been inflicted, and the proportion of illiterates in the country is accordingly large, particularly among the Mahommedan section of the population. It is possible to find officers in the army unable to read or write, and not long ago an illiterate Vali was in charge of an important province. Illiteracy is very rare among the Christian peoples of Turkey, who are entrusted with the administration of their own schools, and who realize that their only chance of prosperity lies in being better educated than their Mussulman neighbours. The proportion of illiterates among the Mahommedans of Turkey may be computed at anything above 30 per cent., and among the Christians at not more than 5 per cent. The spirit of Islam, which in Turkey is or has become inimical to progress, and more especially the policy of the present Sultan, form a most effective barrier to the spread of an enlightened system of education in Turkey. The Pan-Islamic theory consists in the development and combination of the Mussulman peoples on religious and anti-Christian lines under the auspices of a Caliph, who can do no wrong. This fiction of the infallibility of the Caliph colours the school programmes in the most deplorable fashion. Thus the text books of Turkish history, a subject studied by all school pupils at one time or another, present the barest chronological survey of the reigns of successive Sovereigns, omitting any events in any way derogatory to the glory of the Imperial house. General history and philosophy, dangerous and unsettling studies find no place in the Turkish curriculum. International law is taught in the Schools without reference to the Capitulations. Meanwhile increased importance is being attached to religious instruction in the Mahommedan Schools, as many as five hours a week being devoted to this subject in the majority of the schools.

55. The interest of the Sovereign in education is not confined to the founding of schools, for which Abdul Hamid [II] is justly celebrated, and to the preparation of programmes suitable to the exigencies of the Pan-Islamic principle. A strict supervision is exercised not only over the movements of the Ministry of Public Instruction, but also over the teaching in the principal schools of the capital. Any deviation from orthodoxy is immediately reported to the Palace. The rigorous censure of the press and the prohibition of the sale of all Liberal literature supplement the retrograde tendency of the schools. The man who has left school uneducated can only educate himself afterwards by stealth, and at some risk to his liberty. It is only in proficiency at foreign languages that the average Turkish-trained boy of the upper or middle class compares favourably with the average European boy; but, though it is a moot point how far linguistic ability indicates intellectual development, one might fairly infer that the Turk with equal opportunities of study would show similar aptitude for other branches of education.

(1) [From the Annual Report for 1907.]

56. The Oriental notion of the woman and her position is reflected in the education given to girls in Turkey. In the lower classes the educated girl is the exception, while in the higher-grade schools female pupils receive superficial instruction in matters of *ménage* and hygiene, and a smattering of history and literature—the latter often through the medium of Turkish translations of unedifying French novels. The idea that a girl is sufficiently well-educated if she can write a love letter without disgracing herself still prevails in the Eastern mind, and seems unconsciously to fix the standard of female education, especially in the middle classes.

57. The presence of Arabic and Persian on the programmes of the primary schools is explained by the fact that Arabic is to such an extent the sacred language of Islam, that to translate the Koran is considered a sacrilegious act. Moreover, modern Turkish, especially the written language, contains thousands of Arabic and Persian words, as well as numerous grammatical peculiarities which cannot be understood without a knowledge of the general structure of these two languages. Schools in Turkey are divided into four classes—"iptida'ieh," or lower primary; "rushdieh," or higher primary; "idadieh," or secondary; and a few termed "alieh," or superior schools.

58. The number of lower primary schools established in the Empire amounts to about 24,000. Although it is impossible to say how many of these are in regular working order, it would be safe to conclude that a large number are not. The subjects taught in these schools are reading, writing, abridged history of Turkey, the Koran, catechism, simple arithmetic, and the rudiments of Arabic. The course is one of three years, at the completion of which pupils receive certificates enabling them to enter higher primary schools. The average number of hours of study per week is twenty-four, of which eight to nine are devoted to religious instruction.

59. The higher primary schools ("rushdieh") number about 500. The subjects taught are Turkish, Arabic, Persian, arithmetic, history of Turkey, history of Islam, geography, morals, calligraphy, drawing, geometry, agriculture. Several hours per week are also given up to the study of the Koran and to religious instruction.

60. Secondary schools ("idadieh") number about seventy. Their programme is somewhat elaborate, including as it does, besides the ordinary subjects, agriculture, algebra, book-keeping, chemistry, physics, "législation," cosmography, mechanics, political economy, hygiene, and biology. To judge by the average prize-giving function in the provinces, at which chemical experiments usually figure, the teaching of this subject leaves much to be desired, and indeed generally learning by heart seems to be encouraged at the expense of the reasoning faculties. Most secondary schools have a preparatory branch attached to them. The principal "lycée" of Constantinople, or indeed of Turkey, is that of Galata Serai, at which many Christians as well as Mussulmans are educated. This school is divided into a Turkish and a French side. On the latter all the teaching is in French. The pupils number over 700. They are taught gymnastics, and play football with considerable keenness.

61. The Imperial University of Constantinople ("Dar-ul-Funoun-un-Shahaneh") was founded about five years ago, and is the only University in Turkey. It is divided into a school of science, a school of theology, and a school of letters. There are as yet no University buildings, and lectures are held at the Civil Service School, the Director of which is also Principal of the University. Optimists expect that buildings will shortly be erected. Very little interest is taken in this University by the average educated Constantinopolitan, who seems to think that an institution without a "local" cannot really exist.

62. There are at present two law schools in the country, one at Constantinople and another at Salonica. A third is to be opened at Aleppo, and a fourth at Koniah. Judges, Juges d'Instruction, Public Prosecutors, and Advocates practising in the Criminal Courts must possess diplomas from a school of law. The Mekteb-i-Hukouk of Constantinople, which is the chief law school in the Empire, grants diplomas after a course of four years, embracing nearly the whole range of Ottoman jurisprudence. Candidates for admission to the law schools should possess certificates from secondary

schools. Another important foundation is the Imperial Civil School of Constantinople ("Mekteb-i-Mulkieh-i-Shahaneh"), at which future members of the Civil Service are supposed to study for a period of three years. The curriculum is, on the whole, a practical one, comprising law, political economy, official correspondence, French (a language at which the Turks, all things considered, are remarkably proficient), the official languages of the Empire (Arabic, Greek, Armenian, and Bulgarian), and commercial and industrial geography.

63. The Dar-ul-Shefaka is a charitable institution for the education of orphans. Children are admitted by Iradé. The course of training extends over eight years, and covers the same ground as that of the primary and secondary schools. A certain number of pupils on passing their final examinations are appointed to the Posts and Telegraphs and Customs Services, in preparation for which special instruction is given at the school.

64. There are sixteen normal schools for the training of male and female teachers in the Empire. The chief of these is the Dar-ul-Muallimine at Constantinople, which possesses a scientific and a literary side. Pedagogy is among the subjects taught. The schools for female teachers give instruction in sewing and embroidery, as well as in hygiene, a subject widely taught and nevertheless pretty generally misunderstood in Turkey.

65. Constantinople also possesses a school of commerce, the "Hamidié Tizaret Mektebi." The majority of the students at this school are Turks, and there are also a few Armenians. The average Turk has no taste for a commercial career, success in which requires knowledge and industry; and although this school was founded with the object of giving an impulse to the commercial spirit among Mussulmans, I understand that hardly any of its graduates adopt commerce as a profession. In the capital there are also a school of medicine, a school of civil engineering, a veterinary school, an agricultural college, a school of seamanship (merchant service), a polytechnic for boys, as well as a number of military and naval schools. In addition to these there is a higher primary school for the deaf and dumb and for the blind, who are taught by recognized Western methods. The "Ashiret Mektebi," or tribal school, at which young Kurds of good family are educated, was recently closed owing to troubles in Kurdistan.

66. Side by side with the education organized by the State, mainly for the benefit of Mahomedans, there is the education supplied by each Christian community to its own members. It would be beyond the scope of this Report to discuss the elaborate educational system of the numerous Christian bodies and of the Jews, but it is important to remember that these are allowed to exercise a free hand in educational matters under certain conditions, two of the most important of which are that each school should be examined once yearly by an officer of the Ministry of Public Instruction, and that the Turkish language and Turkish history should be compulsory subjects of study.

67. It would be unfair to close the subject of education in Turkey without a reference to the enormous amount of work that is being done by foreign missions, in some cases aided by grants from their Governments, for the education of the non-Mussulman subjects of the Sultan. France, Italy, the United States, Great Britain, and Germany are all represented by schools in various parts of the Empire, and the number of Christian and Jewish children benefiting by their teaching amounts to many thousands. The statement that "Bulgaria owes her existence to the Robert College" is sufficiently near the truth to give an idea of the influence exercised by these schools on the non-Mussulman peoples of Turkey.

III. THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TURKISH EMPIRE.

The System of Provincial Administration [1907].⁽¹⁾

68. The system of provincial and local administration of the Ottoman Dominions is so fully set forth in G. Young's "*Corps de Droit Ottoman*," vol. i. p. 27, that it seems unnecessary to give its details here, but as the practice sometimes falls short of the theory it may be useful to give some account of the most striking features and faults of that practice.

69. The Empire is divided into thirty vilayets administered by Governors-General and seven independent sanjaks administered by Governors. The average population of the vilayets in Europe (except for those of Albania) and Western Anatolia being roughly a million, and in Eastern Anatolia (Armenia, Kurdistan, Mesopotamia, Syria) and Arabia half a million, only Aleppo approaching a million. Each of these provinces is in most respects an independent unit, with its own complete civil and military administration maintained out of its own revenues. So far as the Roumelian vilayets are concerned Europe has familiarized itself with this independence, but Europe perhaps hardly recollects that it exists for the Asiatic vilayets as well, and that when she insists on the revenues of Macedonia being supplemented by the Central Government she is practically robbing the Asiatic provinces. Any one of those provinces feels no doubt that if left to itself it could live and develop on its own revenues, and make some contribution to the Imperial Government, but when it sees the Powers ranged with the Arabs of the Palace in extorting a contribution so large as to starve its own people, that province naturally regards both Powers and Arabs with disgust. To His Majesty's Government it seems monstrous that the whole cost of the troops in Macedonia should fall on local revenues, but to the Anatolian Turk that seems only right and proper.

70. The spoliation of the provinces by the Palace of course takes a different and less direct form. Both Valis and lesser officials have usually to buy protection at the Palace, and in order to have something to pay with they must obviously have recourse to plunder, besides which they naturally wish to make fortunes for themselves. This they can do in numerous ways—by undertaking public works (useful or useless), by commissions of all kinds, by the sale of offices of justice, by charging the public for the performance of ordinary routine duties. The last Prefect of Constantinople is said to have made money by conniving at the sale of bread by false weight, a practice which the present Prefect sternly represses, while willing to make money out of fuel. Charges on the performance of routine duties are not perhaps easy for Europeans to comprehend, unless they realize that in this country the public swarm through the public offices and bargain with the clerks at their desks for the promotion of their particular business.

71. But to return to the independence of the provinces, each of these has its own Budget, which might, as I have said, suffice for its needs, were it not liable at any moment to be upset by demands from Constantinople, which can only be resisted by a very strong Vali indeed; and the fear of these demands naturally prevents the Vali from feeling that he has any real independence, or embarking on any useful economic policy. Moreover, the Defterdar, the head of his financial department, although under his orders, is also responsible to the Ministry of Finance.

72. Apart from finance and military matters, the interference of the Porte and Palace is not so vexatious, and so long as a Vali can find money when required he need not pay very much attention to Constantinople. The Representative of a foreign Power can often succeed in having telegraphic instructions sent in his presence to a Vali, ordering him to take steps which are always to be immediate and usually "energetic"; but it is not always that a high official is so frank as the present Director-General of the Customs, who when interviewed by two British members of the staff of this Embassy, said to the one whom he knew least, "I will certainly telegraph categorical instructions

⁽¹⁾ [From the Annual Report for Turkey for 1907.]

at once," and added to the one whom he knew best, "but it will do no good." I only relate this story as illustrating the independence of the Vali in matters which do not affect financial interests at Constantinople, and the fact that such instructions as will command a Vali's obedience require severe pressure at the Porte.

73. With regard to military matters, the independence of the vilayets is not so clearly marked, as the Empire is divided into military districts which may embrace several vilayets, but the Vali has at his side a Lieutenant-General who commands the troops of the district and acts as a spy on his proceedings. He can call on the General for assistance in maintaining order, but is far from certain to receive it, and in one of the recent revolts at Erzeroum the troops remained placid spectators of the pursuit and seizure by the mob of the Vali himself and the murder of the Chief of Police. It should also be remembered that the troops may often be of different race to the inhabitants, and will behave accordingly. Turkish troops who would not fire on a Turkish mob would gladly fire on an Arab mob, and Albanians would doubtless fire on Turks, while all would fire on a Christian mob. The fact that the civil authorities have so little control over the military is a serious hindrance to the Vali's power of doing good—for instance in Kurdistan, where force is required if the Armenians are to have any protection; in Aidin where the brigands are triumphant; or in the Tigris provinces where the Arabs give constant trouble.

74. In the Aidin Vilayet, whereas it is said that one British officer with a few hundred Turkish troops could clear the country. Chakirji, the brigand leader, is able completely to defy the authorities, and has absolutely refused to accept any more free pardons except on very onerous terms. By way of parenthesis, it may be mentioned that negotiations were said to be proceeding lately between the Governor of Adalia (a brother of the Ottoman Ambassador in Paris), acting for Chakirji, of whom he is an intimate friend, and the Constantinople authorities, as a result of which the brigand was to retire from the Aidin Vilayet with the ransom of some rich Turks lately captured *ad hoc*, the Governor of Adalia receiving a handsome commission.

75. Another difficulty with which Valis have to contend is that the minor officials are not all appointed by them, but have their own protectors at the Palace, so that the Valis have not a free hand in carrying out their own policy, had they one to carry out. The three great difficulties of coping with the Central Government, with the military authorities, and with their own subordinates covers [*sic*] all the ground for provincial Governors in other parts of the world, but in Turkey there are still the foreign Consuls to deal with. Turkish officials can at least be allowed to go their own way so long as their excesses do not involve serious difficulty with a Great Power or with Constantinople, and a policy of *laissez-faire* would, in any case, commend itself to most Valis. Moreover, even the central authorities, however disagreeable, can be dealt with at a distance; the Consuls, on the other hand, are present, and cannot be neglected. To propitiate them an amount of lying is required, which must be difficult even to the most hardened Vali, and distasteful to the more straightforward Vali, but it is a duty which cannot be shirked. The present Vali of Kharput made an endeavour to avoid relations with our Vice-Consul, Mr. Heard, last summer, by not returning his first call, but after a certain time Mr. Heard, accompanied by a friend and two cavasses, went to the Vali's house while his Excellency was at dinner in his garden, and used arguments of such a nature that the deferred visit was paid at dawn next day. The normal course of relations then began. This, however, is an unusual course for relations between Vali and Consul to take. Generally the Vali listens, more or less readily, to the remonstrances or advice of the Consul, and promises to refer to Constantinople. The Consul sees the despatch written, reports its number and date to his Embassy, which watches for its arrival, and secures a suitable reply; the Vali receives, and denies the receipt of, the reply, eventually acknowledges but misunderstands it, and refers back to Constantinople until a settlement can no longer be evaded.

Nevertheless, if the laws of the country were strictly followed, there is no reason why the Vali should not govern his province fairly, as even now some do. But

whatever the merits of the system may be, and even supposing the financial independence of the provinces were restored, the present system of appointing Valis would render improvement almost hopeless. The selection of these most important officials is a matter in which the Grand Vizier and the Council of Ministers has little voice, it is made entirely by the Palace, and is therefore almost uniformly bad. It is, moreover, becoming rapidly worse, owing to the difficulty of finding suitable candidates. A man of strong and independent character is obviously unsuitable, from the Palace point of view; while a weak man, in the present state of anarchy which prevails in Anatolia, finds his position almost untenable. Four-fifths of the vilayets have had a change of Vali during the last two years, and some two or more; and, as a rule, the Vali who has failed in one vilayet has merely been passed on to another. The Grand Vizier regards the matter more or less philosophically, for not long ago he pointed out that it was useless to protest against the appointment of a certain new Vali of Adrianople, as he was so incapable that he would soon have to be removed, which, in fact, he was; but his Highness does sometimes make an effort to secure a good appointment.

76. Leaving for a moment the question of administration, there is another point which must be remembered in connection with the independence of the vilayets, and that is the great difficulty of intercourse between them. No one can go from one vilayet to another without obtaining an elaborate form of passport, and Turkish subjects, more especially Armenians, as often as not meet with a refusal when they apply for such passports. This arrangement, in a country where means of communication are in themselves sufficiently scanty, has the effect of fixing a great gulf between the provinces, checking inordinately the development of trade. Moreover, when the gulf is passed, it is frequently done against the will of the passenger, who is very probably an exile from some other vilayet. Exile in this country is indeed peculiar, for exiles from one vilayet may become high officials in another, and the Grand Vizier himself is an exile from Albania; also, while one man may be exiled from Albania to the Yemen, another, like Haji Gogo, a Koutzo-Vlach brigand who was lately prominent, may be exiled from one part of Macedonia to another. Reports recently furnished by some of His Majesty's Consuls showed that a large proportion of the exiles were in official employment, and of course many high functionaries are sent into exile under the disguise of appointment to higher functions in disagreeable climates.

77. At the present time the whole of the provincial administration is apparently falling into a state of complete anarchy. Taxes have been refused; recruits have been refused. Valis have been driven out, sedition has been preached almost openly; but the practice, if not the theory, of government has the advantage that all these manifestations can be neglected. If when taxes are refused the Central Government replies by repealing them, if the answer to the murder of a Governor-General is merely—to send another and mutiny is a sure means of securing pay, revolution may fail from the very lack of opposition, and the Sultan may regard his reign with complacency, and believe that when he really wishes it he can assert his authority, but this is scarcely a state of things that can last.

78. In reality the system of administration as carried out combines nearly every disadvantage of centralization with all those of decentralization.

IV. THE TURKISH ARMY AND NAVY [1906-7].

(a.) *The Turkish Empire as a Military Factor* [1906] (by Colonel H. C. Surtees).⁽¹⁾

F.O. 971/845.

The strength of the Turkish Army on a war footing is estimated at not less than 1,100,000 men, with some 1,700 field guns.

⁽¹⁾ [From the Annual Report for Turkey for 1906.]

At first sight this seems a very formidable force, especially when we take into consideration the warlike spirit of the Mussulman population, from whom it is exclusively drawn, and the heroism of which the Turkish troops have given proof on innumerable occasions. Moreover, the standard of education and of intelligence both among the officers as well as in the rank and file is now very much higher than it has ever been before in Turkey, owing to the efforts which the present Sultan has made. A large proportion of the superior officers have received their military training in Germany, and the old rankers, or "Alaili," are being steadily replaced by men who have been through the military academies in Constantinople. In addition to these central establishments, similar institutions have now been founded in the chief provincial cities, and some of them have already been in existence a couple of years, and are doing good work in turning out efficient officers. The percentage of literates also amongst the rank and file is rapidly increasing.

With regard to practical training, the case is not so favourable; but in three of the seven army corps, the II, III, and IV, the commanders are certainly doing their best in this direction, and not without a certain measure of success. On the other hand, it must be remembered that nothing like the nominal strength given above will be available for active operations. The state of unrest which is permanent in several parts of the Empire, and the necessity of watching the Greek, Bulgarian, and Russian frontiers will immobilize a large proportion of the army. The VII (Yemen) Corps and the independent division of the Hedjaz may be regarded as not available for service in any part of the Empire except those in which they are now stationed.

The disorganization into which some parts of the army, notably the VI Corps, has been allowed to fall, and the quasi-independence of others (*e.g.*, the Hamidian Irregular Cavalry), will render it difficult to use them except in special cases. The comparative absence of railways and even of decent roads will hinder the mobilization of those that can be used. The strength of the fighting army, which in any case will be far short of 100,000⁽²⁾ men, will vary with the frontier on which it will be required to operate, with the length of time which the Government will have for preparation, and with the general political situation. It will be best to deal with these points separately in considering each individual case.

The experience of the Yemen, where the troops lack the most necessary supplies, shows a weakness of the transport and supply organizations that will greatly weaken the value of the army as a fighting machine.

Another drawback, which will apply in all cases, will be the interference of the Palace, which will damp the energies and disconcert the efforts both of the War Minister in his work of organization, and of the Commander in the field in his conduct of operations.

Even in peace time troops sometimes receive orders direct from the Palace, and it occasionally happens that the War Office is ignorant of the position of certain units, only knowing that they have been moved from their original position by orders given over its head.

During the operations in the Yemen a "Special Yemen Commission," of which however, the War Minister is a member, has been formed at Yildiz, and has greatly hindered the dispatch of reinforcements. Plans worked out by the War Office have been altered, out of all recognition, by this Commission, and much time has been lost in consequence. Redifs who had been mobilized for service in the Yemen received orders and counter-orders, and in some cases were sent back to their homes after they were well on their way to the coast, and were replaced by others. In the case of a serious war this evil may be expected to be greatly accentuated. A "Special Commission" at Yildiz will interfere with the War Office; and the Sultan, acting on the advice of personal favourites, will interfere with the Commission. From these three sources will issue a stream of contradictory orders and counter-orders which

⁽²⁾ [This figure was noted and corrected to 1,100,000 on the suggestion of Sir E. Grey. F.O. 371/345.—4570.]

will lead to inextricable confusion, not only in the mobilization, but in the conduct of operations in the field. The suspicion with which the Sultan regards all men in responsible positions is so great that he controls them by the reports which their colleagues and subordinates are encouraged to send direct to him.

The Commander at the head of the troops will know that he is being spied upon by his own officers, of whom some will be in constant direct telegraphic communication with the Palace, and perhaps be in receipt of orders overriding those given by himself. He will thus lose all confidence and power of initiative. Before taking any decision he will have to ask himself, Will my enemies be able to represent this in an unfavourable light to His Majesty? What effect this will have on the conduct of military operations it is only too easy to foresee.

All these unfavourable considerations are, however, to some extent discounted by the qualities of the Ottoman Turks, which have often stood them in good stead in war, and may be trusted to do so again; their extraordinary talent for improvisation; and their capacity for enduring privations of all kinds without losing courage.

Turks will often be found able to accomplish the most difficult tasks with quite inadequate instruments, and Turkish soldiers left without food, without boots, without shelter will be found able to live, to march, and to fight, where other troops would either mutiny or desert. On this point I may quote the words used by General von der Goltz in his introduction to General Auler's study of the Hedjaz Railway:—

“The story of the Hedjaz Railway clearly shows how gifted is the Ottoman race in improvisation. When in the East, I was often astounded to see what difficult tasks were undertaken with utterly inadequate means and accomplished, in spite of the apparently unsurmountable difficulties in the way, by good-will, by a capacity for making the best of things, and by a sort of naïve obstinacy which refused to regard any hindrance as really serious; tasks that appeared impossible to the European, accustomed to careful preparations, were undertaken with courage and cheerfulness, and with confidence in the help of God, and carried through more easily than could have been believed.”

In the event of a war on her European frontier—*e.g.*, with Bulgaria—Turkey will be able to take the field with all the Nizam troops of the first three army corps, together with the 9th Division of the V Corps at present serving in Bulgaria, or, roughly speaking, 75,000 men, and probably not less than 700 guns.

Of these, however, it is probable that some 20,000 men would be at first retained to garrison the capital and the Chataldja lines; a force of at least 25,000 men would have to watch the Greek frontier, assuming the most likely case that the war is with Bulgaria; another smaller force would have to observe the Servian frontier; and at least 8,000 men would have to be stationed along the railway lines to frustrate the attempts which the Bulgarian Macedonian Committees would certainly make to interfere with the communications by destroying bridges and tunnels.

Within a few days, however, the Redifs (1st and 2nd class) which mobilize in Europe will have been called up, strengthening the army by 52 battalions and 16 squadrons of 1st class Redifs and 156 battalions of 2nd class Redifs.

The arrival of reinforcements from Asia Minor, in any great numbers, could not be expected in less than twenty-five days, and in the case of many of the units the delay would be much longer. In the meantime, the Bulgarians would probably have made a strong dash on Adrianople. If they fulfil in war the promise they have given at manoeuvres and in peace, they may be able to crumple up the II Army Corps before the III, or whatever part of it is available, has either come to its assistance or taken a successful initiative against Sophia, or before it (the II) has had time to assemble all its Redif reserves.

In any case, the Bulgars would at first probably be too strong for the European forces of Turkey and would be able to gain such successes and to so seriously threaten Constantinople within the first four or five weeks of the war, that is to say, before any

very large reinforcements can be brought from Asia Minor, as to compel the intervention of the Powers, which would scarcely remain passive spectators of a Bulgarian attack on the Chataldja lines.

If this were not the case, and the Turkish forces immediately available were able to keep the invaders at bay for several weeks, they would gradually be strengthened by the 140 battalions and 32 squadrons of the 1st class Redif and 14 battalions of 2nd class Redifs, mobilized in Asia Minor, of the first three army corps.

This should be an affair of six weeks, at the end of which the total Turkish force in Europe would be 345,000 men, inclusive of some 20,000 cavalry, and with at least 700 field guns, of which, however, approximately 100,000 would be occupied in garrisoning Constantinople and the Chataldja lines, watching the Greek and Servian frontiers and protecting the lines of communication. In another month's time, and as the result of a great effort, half the IV Corps, say, inclusive of Redifs, 35,000 men, might be brought up. It would scarcely be possible to denude the Russian frontier to a greater extent than this.

The V Corps might also supply further reinforcements, but it must not be forgotten that half the Nizam of this corps is already serving in Europe with the III Corps, and that it would be impossible to leave Syria without a fairly strong garrison.

From the VI (Bagdad) and VII (Yemen) Corps and from the independent divisions of Hedjaz and Tripoli, little or no assistance could now be looked for.

If the attitude of Russia were at all suspicious, few, if any, reinforcements could be sent from Asia Minor, as it would be necessary to concentrate a large force on the natural line of defence, Erzeroum-Van, and generally make preparations to meet any attack from across the Russian frontier. In a war with Bulgaria Turkey would probably fare better if she were to take the offensive, and, instead of waiting to be invaded, were to cross the frontier between Egri Palanka and Djuma'a [Djumaia] Bala and advance on Sophia.

The menace of such a movement would weaken the vigour of the Bulgarian attack along the Maritza Valley. Turkey will, however, be probably too slow in her movements to be able to do this before the attack on Adrianople becomes so serious as to absorb all her strength. In case such a counter-attack were made, the Bulgarians would have the advantage of operating on "interior lines," and having better communications could move troops from Kustendjil to Mustapha Pasha, and *vice versa*, far more quickly than could the Turks. One must not leave out of consideration the possibility that the outbreak of war may be followed, if not preceded, by that of a rebellion in Macedonia, which would hamper the movements of the Turkish army and absorb the energies of a large proportion of the Turkish troops.

With regard to hostilities in Turkey in Asia, the only possibility which we need consider seriously is that of a Russian invasion of Asia Minor. At Erzeroum, which is only 60 miles distant from the nearest point on the Russian frontier, the Turks have important defensive works consisting of sixteen forts. The normal garrison of Erzeroum would on the outbreak of hostilities number 17,200 men, with twelve field batteries, on the arrival of the Ihtiat reserve and the Redif battalions. The least force with which the fortress and position could be held would be 40,000 men, so that the Russians would almost certainly endeavour to seize it before the Turks could move up sufficient reinforcements.

The irregular Hamidieh cavalry regiments between Erzeroum and the frontier are some 20,000 strong on paper, but it is very doubtful whether they would be able to offer any effective opposition to a sudden and vigorous attack. The remainder of the IV Corps could, however, be concentrated at Erzeroum without much delay. In four days the garrison could be increased by 4,000 men and 12 field batteries, and at the end of a fortnight, as the Redifs began to come in, a further 21,200 men would have arrived, bringing the total force up to 42,600 men with 24 field batteries, which in another fortnight would have grown to 63,200 men, without, however, any further increase in the artillery. Another point which would require to be defended would be the head of the Bitlis Pass. For this purpose the Van garrison, 5,000 infantry and

500 cavalry, and perhaps 3 mountain batteries, would probably be withdrawn to this position, where at the end of a fortnight a force of 13,000 men could be collected. Even if the garrison of the Dersim and battalions from Malatia, Kharput, and Arabkir were directed upon this point instead of on Erzeroum, it would only give 21,000 men at the end of a fortnight to hold the Bitlis Pass, without any artillery, except the above-mentioned rather obsolete mountain guns. This exhausts the troops which could be concentrated on the first line of defence, Erzeroum-Bitlis Pass, within a reasonable time of the outbreak of hostilities.

The second line of defence would be Erzinghian-Kharput-Diarbekr, on which the Redifs quartered in Asia Minor of the I, II, and III Army Corps would be at once concentrated. These amount respectively to 51,200 men, 38,400 men, and 19,200 men—total, 108,800 men—without cavalry or artillery, and could reach Erzinghian in from twelve to twenty-two days. On this line would also be concentrated the bulk of that division (10th) of the V Army Corps which remains in Asia. Of this division there would be available some 9,000 men without artillery from the Adana and Marash districts, leaving a garrison of 1,000 men in the probably disturbed Armenian district of Zeitun. These 9,000 men could reach Kharput in about a fortnight.

From Syria could be obtained a force of some 30,000 Redifs and 102 guns (of which 18 are mountain guns), taking into account the necessity of leaving a garrison to watch the Druses, and these could reach Diarbekr in between nine and twenty-six days, or, allowing for delays in mobilization, in thirty-four days.

The total concentration on the Erzinghian-Kharput-Diarbekr line would then be 152,500 men with 102 guns. If the IV Corps were able to hold the Russians in check on the Erzeroum-Van line, this force could be pushed forward to reinforce it. The Syrian troops, it must be remembered, are of very inferior quality and a large proportion of them have been sorely tried by service in the Yemen.

The VI Corps, which is largely composed of half-tamed Kurdish mountaineers, with no love for the Turks, and which is at present in a lamentable state of disorganization, might possibly send contingents to join those concentrating on Diarbekr, but it is likely that they would be cut off by a Russian advance on Sairt and Jeziré down the Bitlis Pass.

This would obviously be one of the objects of a rapid attack by the Russians. The best course for this corps to pursue would probably be to concentrate on Mosul and either strike through Jeziré and the Tigris Valley on the flank of any Russian advance from Bitlis or occupy defensive positions in the gorges of the Tigris above Jeziré.

It would be impossible to reinforce the troops here concentrated by any contingents from European Turkey, as it would be impossible to weaken the power of defence against Bulgaria, and possibly Austria, by a single man.

Moreover, there would always be the possibility that Russia would land a raiding party, or perhaps something more, on one or both sides of the Black Sea mouth of the Bosphorus, say, at Kilios or at Riva, attack the fortifications of the Bosphorus from the rear, and thus enable a fleet to sail through the straits and appear off Constantinople.

If Bulgaria were to join Russia, the Bulgarian attack on Adrianople would be supported by Russian troops landed at Varna or Bourgas, and would be so serious that the Redifs mobilized in Asia Minor of the first three corps would have to be sent to Europe as quickly as possible, and would not be available for the concentration on the Erzinghian-Kharput-Diarbekr line.

The examination of the two most probable wars in which Turkey might become involved has shown the strength of the forces she could put in the field in Europe and in Asia. It is obvious that she is so immeasurably superior to Greece in the one continent and to Persia in the other that if non-military factors did not come into play she would not have the slightest difficulty in overrunning either of these two countries. She would even be able to offer a stout resistance to an Austrian invasion of her European provinces.

An interesting question to consider would be whether Turkey could make a serious

attack on Egypt. The desert would, of course, present a serious, but not insuperable, obstacle. Sultan Selim crossed it with a large army in 1517, and at the end of a ten days' march defeated the Mamelukes in a pitched battle.

The Hedjaz Railway, the Beyrout-Damascus, and the Rayak-Hama Railways would facilitate a concentration. The last-mentioned line has been extended to Aleppo, and before many years have passed it will probably, by the continuation of the Bagdad line to Aleppo, be connected with the Anatolian system, which would enable the Redifs of the first three army corps, that are quartered in Asia Minor, as well as the Syrian troops of the IV Corps, to be brought to Akaba or any other place chosen for a concentration in that direction without water transport. All this would, however, take a good deal of time, during which the garrison of Egypt could be strengthened and during which Great Britain would be able to take the offensive in other parts of the Empire.

The appearance of a British fleet off Salonica would suffice to set Macedonia in a blaze and probably bring a Bulgarian army over the frontier, or a force from India could land in the Persian Gulf and march on Bussorah and Bagdad. The VIth Army Corps could only offer a very feeble resistance to the invaders, who would be cordially welcomed by the Arab population.

A strong force landed in the Bay of Ayas or at Alexandretta could break the line of communication by marching on Adana or Aleppo, and could isolate Syria from Constantinople.

The vulnerability of the Turkish-European railway system at Lagos and at a point some 6 miles north of Dedeagatch is apparent.

A blockade of Hodeida would mean the loss of the Yemen to Turkey, and a landing at Haifa would also have an enormous effect at Yildiz.

H. C. SURTEES, *Colonel*.

Constantinople, November 16, 1906.

(b.) *The Army* [1907].⁽¹⁾

45. Full information was furnished in last year's Report on the organization and capacity under certain circumstances for mobilization of the Turkish army. On the present occasion, therefore, military matters may be dismissed with a very brief notice.

46. The reorganization and completion of the IIInd and IIIrd Army Corps has proceeded rapidly, although there are still many deficiencies to be made good, especially in the matter of horses for the artillery and cavalry, and horses and mules for the transport of all arms of the service. The artillery of these two Army Corps is rapidly being replaced by the new Krupp quick-firers, and a certain amount of work has been accomplished towards completing the defences of Adrianople. On the whole, it may be said that both Army Corps in European Turkey are in a far better state of preparedness than was the case in 1903 at the time of the Bulgarian rising. Whilst the position of the IIInd and IIIrd Army Corps has been materially improved, the same cannot be said of the remaining Army Corps in Syria, Arabia, and Asia Minor. The Vth Corps, the Syrian, has been largely drawn upon in order to strengthen the forces in Europe, and the VIth and VIIth Army Corps at Bagdad and in the Yemen are represented as being in a lamentable condition. The IVth Corps at Erzindjian is better off, though horses for the artillery and cavalry, and horses and mules for transport, are lacking. This Army Corps is now practically equipped with the small-bore Mauser rifle, and has recently received a supply of mountain artillery of the newest type.

47. The end of the year has witnessed considerable military activity in the eastern provinces of the Empire, where preparations have been begun for any future eventual-

⁽¹⁾ [From the Annual Report for Turkey for 1907.]

ties which may arise in connection with the Turco-Persian frontier dispute or the situation in the Armenian provinces. The military authorities of Erzeroum, Bitlis, and Van have been ordered to prepare for mobilization at short notice. Indications of warlike activity have also been reported from Trebizond, Mosul, and Diarbekir. Twelve mountain guns arrived at Erzeroum from Trebizond at the end of December, and a ship-load of horses reached the latter port for the same destination from Odessa on the 15th December. Transport animals and telegraph material for a line to Sujbulak have been collected at Mosul, and a General and forty officers, with six batteries of artillery and 14,000 Mauser rifles, passed through Beirout and Aleppo on their way to Bagdad on the 30th December. Captain Dickson, His Majesty's Consul at Van, has informed me that there are signs of an intention to create a large military base on the Moush Plain for the use of Vth Army Corps from Damascus in the event of a war with Russia. There is no doubt that the Turkish officers on the spot regard Russia, and not Persia, as the enemy that may have to be dealt with, and though the Grand Vizier attributes these preparations to an exaggerated idea held at the War Office of warlike preparations in Persia, it may be well to remember that Russia is the hereditary enemy of the Turks, and that her prestige here has suffered from the recent war in the Far East. In Turkey in Europe it has been decided to form three new regiments for the Vilayets of Salonica, Monastir, and Kossovo, and troops have been collected at Smyrna for shipment to Salonica in order to fill the place of the battalions chosen to form the new regiments.

48. The past year has witnessed several cases of mutiny amongst the troops for arrears of pay. In every case the men carried their point, and after obtaining what was due to them quietly dispersed.

(c.) *Turkish Naval Policy and Armaments* [1907].⁽¹⁾

49. There has been no settled naval policy in Turkey ever since the idea of having a modern fleet first entered the mind of the Sultan Abdul Medjid after the Crimean war, but the fleet has been created by a collection of fortuitous circumstances. Under the Sultan Abdul Aziz the fleet started by Abdul Medjid continued to increase, and in the year 1874 took the third place in the fleets of Europe, so that in the Russian war it was able to keep command of the Black Sea and to check the operations of the Russian fleet. The sight of this powerful fleet, which used to be anchored in the Bosphorus opposite the palace of Dolma Bagtche, is said to have so alarmed the present Sultan, Abdul Hamid, fearful as he was that a conspiracy to dethrone him might arise on board these ships, that he ordered them all to be sent into the Golden Horn, behind the two bridges, there to remain, rotting and dismantled, with guns, ammunition, and even essential parts of their machinery removed, until the Greek war of 1897, when rumoured accounts of the bombardment of Turkish towns by the Greek fleet so raised the public alarm and indignation that the Sultan realized that something had to be done. He accordingly gave an order that the fleet was to sail from the Golden Horn in a fortnight; and in exactly a fortnight the ships of the First Division of the Mediterranean fleet, as it was proudly called, steamed slowly out through the bridges, yards manned and bands playing, amidst the cheers of the crowds of people gathered to watch the scene, saluted the Sultan, and proceeded towards the Dardanelles, which it eventually reached not without difficulty, and where all that is left of it, eight obsolete and disreputable old ironclads, remain to this day, a monument to the power of the Sultan's Iradé, which was able to accomplish what seemed to be absolutely impossible. The fearful state of these ships was due partly to the action of the Sultan, but principally to the rapacity of the then Minister of Marine, Admiral Hassan Pasha,

⁽¹⁾ [Written by Commander Taylor, H.M.S. "Imogene," in the absence of the Naval Attaché.]

who took every opportunity of getting credits for the navy which he used for himself, and who died about four years ago reputed to be worth some 3 millions, having been Minister of Marine for about twenty-five years. His chief frauds were in the way of construction of new ships: the keels of a battle-ship ("Abdul Kadir") and a cruiser ("Khudavendighair") were laid down in Constantinople and two corvettes at Ismidt ("Feizi Bahri" and "Shadiyeh"). Every year he obtained grants for the construction of these ships, and every year beautiful coloured plans were submitted to the Palace showing the progress made and what remained to be done; little or nothing was ever done. This was all exposed in 1904, when certain foreign firms were asked for estimates to complete them. Nothing now remains of these four ships except the rusty iron frames of the "Khudavendighair." In about the year 1900, however, His Majesty turned his attention towards the formation of a modern fleet; one or two torpedo-boats had arrived from Germany, and his interest was awakened. About this time the American Government was insisting on its claims for indemnity for losses to American subjects during the Armenian massacres; the Sublime Porte, in order to "save face," agreed to order a cruiser from America, the price of which was to include the amount of the indemnity; the same agreement was made with England, while Italy and Germany got the repairing of several ships, and France the order for torpedo-boats; thus in 1903 the modern navy came into existence. When Hassan Pasha died, a civilian, Djallal Pasha, was appointed Minister of Marine, all matters naval were passed through the hands of a Palace official, and so brought under the eyes of the Sultan himself: no money is now spent without an *Irade* from His Majesty, and all payments are made by the Military Equipment Fund. The Minister of Marine was thus made a nonentity, as also his Supreme Council; moreover, having no money, outbreaks of time-expired sailors wanting their pay became more and more frequent, and, after one more than usually serious, the Minister was dismissed, and Admiral Hassan Ramy, for the last ten years in command of the squadron at the Dardanelles, had served for some five years in the British navy, and on succeeding to his present position was anxious to carry out certain works and reforms. His hands are, however, tied, and he has been able to effect nothing.

50. The Sultan is now assisted in his decisions by Admiral Bucknam Pasha, A.D.C., an American officer in the Turkish service, whom he consults on even the most trivial subjects connected with the fleet. This officer was formerly a Superintendent of Cramp's at Philadelphia, and then "Trial Commander," being in command of several ships built for foreign Governments. In this capacity he brought out the "Abdul Medjid," built by Cramp's, and was at once offered a post in the Turkish navy, in which service he has obtained rapid promotion, enjoying as he does the complete confidence of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan. Last year Captain Bucknam was sent to Kiel to bring out the "Assar-i-Tewfik," which had been repaired and rearmed by the Germania Works, and in so doing exposed many frauds, both by the contractors and by Turkish officials. The Commission ordered to assemble to inquire into these matters came to an abrupt end, owing to the sudden death of the President and other members of it. In October of this year, in spite of great opposition by the German Embassy, prompted by the agents of the Germania Works, Captain Bucknam was again sent to Kiel to bring out the two new torpedo gun-boats, "Peik-i-Shevk" and "Berck-i-Satvet," built there, and on his successful arrival with them at Constantinople was promoted to Rear-Admiral and made a Pasha. Another American officer, Captain Ledbetter, joined the Turkish service last June under a two years' contract, with the ostensible purpose of reorganizing the torpedo service, but he has been allowed to do little. He accompanied Captain Bucknam to Kiel and commanded the "Berck-i-Satvet."

51. The Sultan professes to be anxious to put the navy on a proper footing, and amongst the younger officers there is a great desire to improve themselves; but many intrigues hamper progressive movements, and render futile the efforts of the various Commissions to effect reforms. Until the ships are allowed to go to sea the officers will never know their business, nor will the men ever become seamen. Except the torpedo-

boats, none of the modern or modernized vessels have ever left the Golden Horn since delivery, and with a very few exceptions not an officer or man in the Turkish navy has ever seen a gun fired or a torpedo run. The officers are certainly taught seamanship and navigation at Halki College, but neither of these sciences can be learnt without sea training, and the only sea training the officers obtain is in the rotten steamers of the Mahsousse fleet. The men are drilled on board the modern ships and torpedo-boats.

52. Leaving out of consideration the obsolete and worthless ships at the Dardanelles and elsewhere, also the rotten hulks in the Golden Horn, the guard-ships, and small gun-boats on police duty, the Turkish fleet consists of:—

1 battle-ship	... ..	"Messoudiyeh," 8,972 tons.
4 small armoured cruisers	... ..	"Fethi-Bulend," 2,761 tons; "Avni-illah," 2,362 tons; "Muini-Zaffir," 2,362 tons; and "Assar-i-Tewfik," 4,613 tons.
2 second-class protected cruisers	... ..	"Abdul-Hamid," 3,830 tons; and "Abdul-Medjid," 3,250 tons.
3 torpedo gun-boats	... ..	"Peik-i-Shevket" and "Berck-i-Satvet," of about 1,000 tons; and "Pelenk-i-Darya," 850 tons.
3 destroyers	... ..	"Tayyar," 270 tons; "Busorrah" and "Samsoun," 290 tons, expected shortly from France.
15 first-class torpedo-boats	... ..	"Angara," "Urfa," "Antalia," "Tokat," "Divads," "Kutahia," "Messul," "Akhissar," "Alpagot," "Hamidieh," "Yunnis," "Hamid-Abad," "Sultan-Hissar," "Timour-Hissar," "Sivri-Hissar."

All of which are new or recently rearmed, carry modern quick-firing guns and torpedoes, and are fit for service. Besides these there are 1 destroyer, 15 first-class boats, and 6 second-class, mostly unseaworthy and in need of extensive repairs. There are also 2 obsolete Nordenfelt submarines quite useless. Other torpedo-boats are shortly expected from France. An order for 8 or 9 small gun-boats was also placed in France for the preventive service, three of which have already arrived at Constantinople, namely, the "Aintab," "Baffra," and "Malassia"; these are of about 400 tons, carrying 2 small guns and 1—18-inch torpedo-tube (the utility of which in a 10-knot ship seems questionable); these three ships each have actually 1—18-inch Swartzkopff torpedo on board. A cruiser has also been ordered from Messrs. Ansaldo, of Genoa, as already mentioned. Turkey possesses some 80—14-inch torpedoes, mostly Swartzkopff, a few Whitehead; these are kept in store in the arsenal and appear to be in good condition. Some of the modern ships and torpedo-boats are fitted for 18-inch torpedoes, but with the exception of the three mentioned above there are none of this size in the country, nor is it likely that there will be any for about two years.

53. The ordering of some modern submarines is in contemplation for the defence of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus; there is a rumour that the agents of Messrs. Krupp are trying to get the order. Should Turkey acquire any submarines, or should the ships in the Golden Horn ever go to sea, foreign officers would undoubtedly be required to command them for a few years, or until the Turkish officers should have learnt to do so. There is a further rumour, as yet unconfirmed, that a number of young Turkish officers will be admitted to the German navy for training. In view of these rumours and facts, it would seem advisable to endeavour to place the orders for submarines in England or America, and to offer to train the officers in the British or American navy if anywhere.

V. THE HAMIDIAN DIPLOMACY [1907].

(a.) *General Foreign Relations.*⁽¹⁾

The foreign relations of Turkey may be summarized with about equal utility and assurance in one page or in thirty, and if I prefer the former, it is because I do not recollect in the despatches of my nine predecessors who have been accredited to the Sultan Abdul Hamid from the year 1876 to 1898 a single forecast of events which has stood the test of time, and stands out as an instance of special diplomatic prescience, save in so far as these predictions have been based on general lines indicative of the obstructive policy of the Sovereign and the steadily increasing financial and administrative disorganisation in all the Departments of the Government.

2. There are only two factors in the general political situation that show forth with any clearness during, at all events, the last ten years. The one is the astute policy which induced the Sultan to pose before 300,000,000 of Mohammedans as the Caliph and spiritual head of his religion, and in bringing home to his subjects the fervour and energy of his religious feelings by the construction of the Hedjaz Railway, which, in the near future, will afford facilities to every Moslem to perform the pilgrimage to the holy places of Mecca and Medina, and throw open to them in the next life the joys and delights of paradise. The effect has been that he has commanded, to an unprecedented degree, the blind obedience of his subjects, and reconciled them to a despotism more absolute than has perhaps ever been known in the whole course of history. The will of the "Padishah" has become the law of the land, and the unfortunate Moslem who feels the cruel oppression and tyranny of the Government lays his grievances at the door of the officials, and attributes no evil action to the Caliph.

3. If this policy affects more directly the internal than the foreign relations of the country, the other factor is one that distinctly marks the foreign relations of Turkey. It is based on the maintenance of the friendliest relations between His Imperial Majesty and the German Emperor. This policy was conceived, planned, and formulated by the Sultan, and dates back to the time when the German officers were sent here to reorganize the Turkish Army under the auspices of the distinguished General Von der Goltz Pasha. It progressed slowly for several years, and bore little fruit till after the Emperor Wilhelm's visit to Constantinople in 1898. The Sultan was under the odium and cloud of the Armenian massacres. The European Powers showed their displeasure. They barely tolerated the Greek war, and interfered to prevent Turkey reaping the benefits of her military successes and Greece from suffering the punishment of her aggressive policy. They shortly afterwards approved of the autonomy of Crete. The Emperor did not see his way to gainsaying the decisions of Europe. But he came to Constantinople with the Empress, spent a week at Yildiz, showed himself as the personal friend of the Sultan, and, as far as lay in his power, whitewashed the Sultan before Europe. If the policy of Germany was neither humane nor creditable, it was at all events positive and material. It secured them the Concession of the Bagdad Railway, the monopoly of all orders for military munitions for the Turkish Army, and a privileged position for all industrial and commercial Concessions which it was in the power of the Sultan to bestow upon his friend and patron. The Sultan has not deviated during the last ten years from this course, nor is there any likelihood of any deviation during his lifetime, the duration of which depends on the talent and capacity of the German doctor, Dr. Bier, who was sent here by the Emperor's friend, Dr. Bergman, to attend solely upon His Imperial Majesty.

4. The relations between Great Britain and Turkey, so far as they depend upon the Sultan, are little more than tolerable. The policy of His Majesty's Government with regard to Macedonia, Armenia, and other oppressed nationalities is objectionable and even hateful. If he preserves a show of friendliness it is mainly owing to the fact that

⁽¹⁾ [From the Annual Report for Turkey for 1907.]

he believes 80 per cent. of his subjects—and this he has told me himself more than once—are friendly to England and mindful of the services rendered by us in the past.

5. The Sultan has grown up with a distrust of Russia, but since the Russo-Japanese war he has exhibited feelings of magnanimity towards his former foe whom he no longer thinks dangerous to his throne and Empire.

6. His Majesty is patient and conciliatory towards Austria, not so much because he trusts her policy as because he considers she is prohibited by the conflict of races and the predominance of Germany from a course of aggression extending her territory to the south.

7. Italy he mistrusts, but loses no opportunity of propitiating by personal attentions to the King and by various courtesies and civilities. He is fully aware of her territorial designs upon Tripoli, but he does not think they can come to a head during his lifetime, and cares very little what will happen after.

8. Towards France he is animated by friendly feelings. He remembers her services in the Crimea, he calls largely upon her sympathy in checkmating the designs of the Young Turks and other revolutionary parties, whose head-quarters are in Paris, and he buys this support by concessions and valuable orders. Apart from this, he knows that the stability of the financial position of the Ottoman Empire depends in great measure upon the French Government and the support of French financiers, and he cannot afford to disregard any reasonable demands preferred by the Quai d'Orsay.

9. As regards America, the Sultan has little more than a feeling of indifference, possibly accompanied by dislike of their republican institutions and their desire, through their missionaries, to spread the light of Christianity and civilization throughout his benighted land.

10. His Majesty fears and respects Roumania. He preserves with her as cordial relations as possible, for he dreads anything that might tempt her into an alliance with Bulgaria, rightly feeling that an *entente* between the two Governments would be the most grave event for Turkey. He doubtless counts on the good offices of the Emperor Wilhelm preventing Roumania from entangling herself in alliances—at all events during the lifetime of the present King.

11. Bulgaria and her Prince His Majesty cordially dislikes and mistrusts. In this he is supported by all his Moslem subjects, and by all the others who are not Bulgarian.

12. Greece he neither dislikes nor fears. As a counterpoise to Bulgarian political activity he tries to keep on terms with her; he imagines he can influence the Greek Patriarch in any crisis, and he plays fast and loose with the Greek Government and their Representative.

13. Of Servia the Sultan takes little count, save as a possible enemy of Bulgaria.

14. As to a general line of policy in the external relations of Turkey, I do not believe the Sultan has any. His Majesty is essentially an opportunist, and is content that political interests shall be settled *de jour au jour*, as events occur. Beyond the maintenance of intimate relations with Germany, he has no political aspirations or designs.

(b.) *Commercial Relations* [1907].

15. Turkey has no Commercial Treaties in force with any but non-capitulatory countries, her Treaties of 1861–2 with the capitulatory Powers having expired in 1883–4.* By the Capitulations she is precluded from imposing new duties on goods from capitulatory countries without their consent, and all enjoy most-favoured-nation treatment. By various arrangements, made in 1883–4, the import duties which she is allowed to levy were fixed at 8 per cent. *ad valorem*, and at this rate it remained until last year, when, as the result of negotiations reported elsewhere in this Memorandum, a surtax of 3 per cent. was conceded, to remain in force, subject to the fulfilment by

* For the Capitulations, see *infra*. [Ed. The Capitulations part has not been thought worth reproduction.]

the Porte of certain conditions laid down by the Powers, until 1914. To Greece, Persia, Montenegro, Roumania, and Servia, which are, of course, non-capitulatory Powers, most-favoured-nation treatment has been secured by special arrangements in recent years. Between Turkey and Bulgaria trade is free with the exception of certain goods defined by a Convention signed last year.

16. Although negotiations have been entered into with the Great Powers for the conclusion of new Treaties, the Porte has only been able to bring them to a successful termination in one single case, which led to the signing of a Treaty with Germany in 1890. The *procès-verbal de signature* attached to this Treaty, however, stipulates that none of the provisions of the Treaty, nor the tariff annexed, are to be applied to German subjects or merchandize without the consent of the German Government, unless these provisions and tariff are at the same time equally applied to subjects and merchandize of other countries. This stipulation postpones the operation of the Treaty indefinitely, for none of the Treaties with the other Powers have been signed. The French negotiations were, indeed, brought to a conclusion in 1900, but the draft Treaty has yet to be discussed and passed by the French Chambers.

VI. TURKISH FINANCE AND CONCESSIONS [1907].

(a.) Finance [1907].⁽¹⁾

26. No Estimates are published by the Ottoman Government, and it is impossible to give exact figures. The revenue for the current year may be roughly estimated at some £T. 20,000,000, out of which £T. 3,800,000 are required for the interest and amortization of the funded external debt, £T. 350,000 for the annual instalment of the Russian war indemnity, and a sum varying from year to year, but which amounted in the last financial year to £T. 691,000, needed to make good the kilometric guarantees which most of the foreign railways in Turkey receive from the Government. Of the funded debt,* amounting to some £T. 88,000,000, the whole of it secured on specific revenues, the service of £T. 11,000,000 is intrusted to the Ottoman Bank, and that of the remainder to the Council of Administration of the Public Ottoman Debt. The circumstances of the foundation of this body in 1881 by what is known as the Decree of Muharrem, in order to protect the interests of the foreign bondholders, its history and the extension of its functions are described at length in George Young's "*Corps de Droit Ottoman*," vol. v., pp. 55, *et seq.* It must suffice here to state that, besides its original functions, *i.e.*, the administration of the debt placed under its control at the time of its institution, it has been intrusted, under Agreements between the Turkish Government and the financial establishments of the Railway Companies concerned, with the service of a number of loans contracted subsequently and of the railway kilometric guarantees. The revenues assigned for the service of the original debt are known as the "ceded revenues." Those assigned for the services subsequently intrusted to the Council of Administration are known as the "revenus divers," or the "new revenues." The former consist of the proceeds of the salt and the greater part of the proceeds of the tobacco monopolies, the stamp, silk, spirits, and fisheries revenues, the tobacco tithes, the Roumelian tribute, and certain customs receipts substituted for other resources originally affected, but since diverted to other purposes. The Decree of Muharrem also secured for the bondholders the proceeds of any future increase of the customs duties due to a revision of the Treaties of Commerce. Until 1903 the whole of the ceded revenues was applied to the service of the different categories of bonds into which the old debt was divided. In that year arrangements

⁽¹⁾ [From the Annual Report for Turkey for 1907.]

*I exclude throughout the debt secured on the Egyptian and Cyprus tributes.

were made by which the greater part of these different categories were converted into one uniform class of 4 per cent. bonds, and for the service of the whole of the old debt a fixed annuity of £T. 2,157,375 was assigned from the "ceded revenues," any excess of these revenues over and above that sum being divided between the Government and the bondholders in the proportion of 75 per cent. and 25 per cent. respectively, the latter share going to accelerate the extinction of the old debt. The "new revenues" consist principally of the tithes and the proceeds of certain other taxes in specified districts, and any surplus over and above the service of the various loans and kilometric guarantees belongs, of course, to the Ottoman Government. The "ceded revenues" may always be counted upon to provide a surplus, and in ordinary years there is also a surplus from the "new revenues," but the latter is an uncertain resource, as it depends doubly on the prosperity of the farmers. A bad harvest not only reduces the proceeds of the tithes, but also, inasmuch as it adversely affects the traffic returns, increases the amount due from Government on the railway kilometric guarantees. In the financial year 1906-7 the surplus of the "ceded revenues" amounted to £T. 495,834, and that of the "new revenues" to the exceptionally large sum of £T. 686,574.†

27. In calculating the total indebtedness of the Government there must be taken into account in addition to the funded debt of £T. 88,000,000, a floating debt of the amount of which it would be rash for me to hazard an estimate. I observe that Sir Adam Block places it at £T. 15,000,000. Assuming this figure to be approximately correct, and including the £T. 27,000,000 still due to Russia for the war indemnity, the total indebtedness would amount to some £T. 130,000,000, involving an annual charge, leaving out of the account the charges on the floating debt of £T. 4,151,000. The service of the kilometric guarantees would bring this up to some £T. 4,800,000. This charge is not excessive in proportion to the population—about 3s. a-head—or to the potential wealth of the country, but it represents nearly 25 per cent. of the revenue, and the residue available for the current expenses of Government is inadequate. The annual deficit it is impossible to estimate accurately, but judging from the sums which Turkey has been obliged during the last few years to raise by conversions and other borrowing operations, it must be well over £T. 2,000,000.

28. So long as the present régime lasts, with its wasteful expenditure, its corruption, and its obstructive attitude in regard to the development of commerce and industries, it is vain to hope for any approach to equilibrium. The advances obtained by the Treasury since the beginning of the current financial year from the Ottoman Bank, the Deutsche Bank, the Deutsche Orient Bank, the Lighthouse Administration, and the Tobacco Régie, amount to nearly £T. 1,500,000, and Sir A. Block, writing in October, states that the Government had then anticipated its revenues to the extent of £T. 1,717,000. Since then, though some part of these advances has been repaid, a further sum of £T. 250,000 has been advanced by the Ottoman Bank, and £T. 100,000 by the Régie, so that to-day future revenues stand pledged on account of short loans to the amount of nearly £T. 2,000,000. The surplus of the "ceded revenues" is so heavily pledged that it is not likely to be free till the end of 1910, and the customs revenue, the surplus of the "new revenues," the Government's share in the tobacco monopoly, have all been anticipated for next year. Notwithstanding these heavy advances, the Treasury is to-day at its wit's end for money. The festival of Bairam is approaching, when it is customary to pay one month's military pay and civil salaries in the capital in cash. (In ordinary months these are paid in promissory notes, the discounting of which is no easy matter.) £T. 250,000 are needed for this, and the annual instalment of the Russian war indemnity falls due next month. The Treasury is seeking to effect the conversion of the 5 per cent. loan of 1896 and of the 1890 Osmanie loan, the only loans which still admit of remunerative conversion, the idea being in the former case to reduce the interest to 4 per cent., and in the latter to extend the period of redemption. By this

† This includes certain arrears.

scheme about £ T. 1,200,000 could be raised, but Paris, the most accessible money market to-day, declines its assistance unless a project in which French capitalists are interested (see *infra*) for the consolidation of the Heraklea coal-fields goes through. Even if these schemes are carried out, they can only afford temporary relief. The crisis might indeed be staved off for a time by a remunerative rearrangement of the tobacco monopoly, but although schemes for this purpose have been mooted none has taken shape, and it must be remembered that the present Concession has still nearly seven years to run. Thorough reform of the Financial Administration is what is needed, and of this there is no hope under the present régime. With an annual deficit of over £ T. 2,000,000, with revenues which ought to be available for future expenditure already pledged in order to make ends meet for the moment, and with the probability of diminished customs and tithes receipts next year, owing to the commercial crisis now prevailing and the poor crop prospects, the outlook could hardly be worse. It may be that the day is not far distant when the Treasury, driven by stress of circumstances, will find the temptation irresistible to lay hands on some of the revenues intrusted to the Public Debt—in the first instance, probably, the “revenus divers”—thus involving the complications connected with the question of foreign financial control.

29. I have on two occasions during the past year drawn the earnest attention of the Sultan to the desperate financial situation, and I suggested that he should submit the position to thorough examination by honest, competent, and independent experts, with full powers of access to the accounts of the various Departments of State, always excepting the Civil List, so that His Majesty might be accurately informed as to the situation. with a view to the adoption of remedial measures to relieve him from his embarrassments. The Sultan seemed to take my remarks to heart. and the Grand Vizier told me later that His Majesty had been greatly disturbed by what I had said. So far, however, he has given no sign of intending to act on my suggestion.

(b.) *Concessions obtained by Foreign Countries [1907].*

41. Amongst Concessions obtained in Turkey during the past year by foreign interests must be mentioned one secured by the Anatolian Railway for the doubling of its line as far as Pendik, and for the irrigation of a tract of country 180,000 acres in extent to the south of Koniah, the latter a work of the greatest utility, and likely also to be of great benefit to the railway. This scheme, the details of which are not accurately known at the time of writing, is connected with the doubling of the Company's capital, the whole of the new shares amounting to 67,500,000 fr. nominal, being taken up by the Deutsche Bank.

42. By dint of vigorous pressure, the Italian Embassy has secured for the firm of Ansaldo, in Genoa, an order for a cruiser. The action of the Italian Ambassador in pressing the Turkish Government to commit this act of folly, which well illustrates the ineptitude with which the Turkish finances are administered, has provoked a good deal of unfavourable comment. The cruiser, when built, is destined doubtless to join the rest of the Turkish fleet rotting in the Golden Horn or at the Dardanelles. It should be mentioned that this order to Ansaldo violates a promise made by the Sultan some years ago to Armstrong's, that the next ship should be built by them. I have been careful not to allow His Majesty to lose sight of this fact, but I have not seen my way to press for an order for the British firm. I understand that the cruiser is not likely to be built in the near future; but, even if it is, I should be loth to make the commission of an act of folly by the Sultan an excuse for urging him to commit another. I have, however, made it known that His Majesty's Government expects compensation in one form or another for the violation of a promise given by the Sultan himself, and if any of our present British schemes take a practical shape, I hope to make use of this incident to press them.

43. The Germans have at last secured the Concession, for which they have been pressing for so long, for the construction at a cost of £ T. 200,000, of a solid bridge to

replace the old one crossing the Golden Horn from Galata to Stamboul. The Deutsche Bank is prepared to advance the funds on satisfactory security, but, as this is not forthcoming, the matter is in abeyance.

44. A French group possessing colliery rights in the Heraklea Valley is endeavouring, with the strenuous support of the French Ambassador, to secure the consolidation of the various colliery interests in the district, but the project is meeting with great difficulties, not only because of the exorbitant terms asked by some of the parties concerned, but also because of the objections of the Sultan's Government. Although the French group have in mind the working of the coal-field by an Ottoman Company, the Company would, of course, be Ottoman only in name, and the Sultan, who is possessed with the idea that the gold mines on the Rand led to the absorption of the Transvaal in the British Empire, shrinks from facilitating the development under foreign management of the richest coal-field in the country, which is at the same time so accessible to Russia.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE INTERNATIONAL CONTROL OF MACEDONIA. (1903-4.)

1. THE MÜRZSTEG PUNCTATION, 1903.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The story of the tragic events in Macedonia and of the attempts by the Great Powers to intervene is told with relative fulness in the Parliamentary Papers. It has been decided, however, to tell the story of 1901-3 by using various Foreign Office summaries, which contain as a rule the texts of the most important documents. These are distinguished by the insertion of "Ann[ex]" after their number.⁽¹⁾ At times other unpublished documents, which throw a fuller light on the narrative, are introduced into the Memorandum by the Editors. These are distinguished by being placed in double brackets **[[. . .]]** and by the use of "Ed. Add." after their number.]

Memorandum by Mr. Maxwell respecting the Disturbances in Macedonia and proposed Measures of Reform.⁽²⁾

F.O. Turkey 5354.

Foreign Office, February 1, 1904.

For the last three years the state of unrest in Macedonia has been constantly increasing in gravity. Early in 1901 various disturbances took place and in January of that year, and following upon a serious conflict which occurred at Ishtib in the Vilayet of Kossovo, His Majesty's Ambassador, acting under instructions, drew the attention of the Porte to the reports of outrages which had reached him and to the general state of insecurity which prevailed.

Sir N. O'Connor,
February 19, 1901.

Similar representations were made by most of the other Embassies.

Representations were about the same time made to the Bulgarian Government by most of the Powers emphasizing the danger arising out of the proceedings of the Bulgarian Committees in Macedonia and urging the expediency of discouraging and checking their lawless proceedings.

His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Sofia made a representation to this effect in February 1901.

Mr. Elliot,
February 27, 1901.

No improvement took place in the situation during 1901 and early in 1902 disquieting rumours were again prevalent of an impending rising. The Austrian and Russian Governments were agreed as to the necessity of acting together by representations at Constantinople and Sofia for the prevention of an outbreak and in this policy they were supported throughout by His Majesty's Government. No general rising took place in the course of the spring and summer but the state of affairs became continually worse. In July joint representations were made to the Porte by the Austrian and Russian Ambassadors which resulted in the despatch of special instructions to the Valis and the appointment of a Technical Commission to consider certain reforms which were recommended by the Council of Ministers.

Mr. de Bunsen,
July 23, 1903. [sic.]

These measures, if ever actually carried out, were entirely without effect and in November the Russian Ambassador made a strong representation to the Sultan.

Sir N. O'Connor,
December 1, 1902.

He called attention to the disorder in Albania and the unsatisfactory situation in Macedonia which, unless the Turkish Government removed the grounds of discontent, would be indefinitely prolonged.

⁽¹⁾ [The texts of such documents have been checked by the originals, and the references to the F.O. volumes in which they occur have been added.]

⁽²⁾ [A good deal of information covering the years 1901-3 was published in *A. & P.* (1903), LXXXVII, (*Cd.* 1403), pp. 261-574; (*Cd.* 1467), pp. 575-582; (*Cd.* 1532), pp. 583-686; and *A. & P.* (1904), CX, (*Cd.* 1875), pp. 381-734; (*Cd.* 1879), pp. 735-910; (*Cd.* 1808), pp. 911-926. For the German side to the end of 1903, v. *G.P.*, XVIII, I, chs. 117-118.]

It was, he said, of urgent necessity that the general administration should be improved, that the gendarmerie, troops and civil servants should be regularly paid and that various reforms should be introduced, among others that the Christian element should be represented in the gendarmerie. To avert the possible interference of foreign Powers if legitimate grievances were not redressed, he offered to draw up in concert with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador an *aide-mémoire* of the measures which the situation appeared to demand.

The Sultan declined this offer which he said was quite unnecessary as a scheme of administrative improvement was already under consideration.

This scheme took shape in the appointment of a Commission which was to sit permanently at the Porte during the winter to supervise the work of reform, and two Inspectors—one of whom was Hilmi Pasha—were to be sent to Macedonia to furnish Reports to the Commission in Constantinople.

The text of this scheme was communicated to Sir N. O'Connor a few days later, and it was described by him as palpably insufficient to meet the requirements of the situation, though, containing as it did a proposal for the introduction of Christians into the gendarmerie, it might open the road for further suggestions from the Powers.

Sir N. O'Connor took the opportunity to suggest that a Christian member should be appointed on the Commission and that steps should be taken to provide an adequate and fixed sum annually for the payment of the judicial and financial departments and the gendarmerie and police. This suggestion was not accepted. Meanwhile Hilmi Pasha proceeded to Macedonia where he has since remained.

Telegrams in terms which looked well on paper were subsequently addressed by the Sultan's First Secretary and the Grand Vizier to the Valis of European Turkey for the better administration of the provinces, but no improvement in the situation resulted.

About this time it was announced that Count Lamsdorff would pay a visit to Vienna and also to Sofia and Belgrade, and the attitude and views of His Majesty's Government were explained in despatches to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Vienna and Constantinople in the following terms.

No. 1. Ann.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Plunkett.

F.O. Austria 1837.

(No. 6.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 6, 1903.

I told the Austro-Hung[aria]n Amb[assado]r to-day that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t were watching with close interest the efforts of the Austrian and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts to arrive at an understanding with the Porte as to the introduction of an improved system of local Government in Macedonia.

We recognised that Austria and Russia were specially interested in the matter, and also that they were in a specially advantageous position for dealing with it but H[is] E[xc]ellency w[ould] I was sure understand the immense importance which we attached to the question and our earnest desire to contribute, so far as our opportunities permitted, to its satisfactory solution. We had instructed our Amb[assado]r at Constantinople to impress upon the Sultan the gravity of the situation and the absolute necessity of introducing substantial measures of reform. H[is] E[xc]ellency would find me at any time ready to discuss with him the steps which might be taken in order to promote the adoption of such measures.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 2. Ann.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Connor.

F.O. Turkey 5263.

(No. 10.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 9, 1903.

I have already in my tel[egram] No. 189 of Dec[ember] 21 conveyed to Y[our] E[xc]ellency my approval of the language held by you, at a private audience with the Sultan on Dec[ember] 18, in regard to Macedonia as reported by you in your tel[egram] No. 143 of the 19th ult[imo].

I have now received and read with much interest your despatch No. 553 of the same date giving a fuller account of what passed on that occasion and I have to state that the advice

Sir N. O'Connor,
December 9, 1902.

Sir N. O'Connor,
December 23, 1902.

Mr. Milbanke,
December 17, 1902.

Mr. Elliot,
December 18, 1902.

offered by Y[our] E[xcellency] to H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty] was thoroughly in accordance with the views of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment].

In their opinion the condition of the population in this portion of the Turkish empire has become almost intolerable and the need for measures of reform is urgent. They agree with Y[our] E[xcellency] that the appointment of one or more Christians of established position and reputation to take part in the Commission of enquiry now sitting at the Porte and on that of inspection sent to the spot would be advantageous. But what is most urgently needed at the present moment is not enquiry but measures of immediate and practical reform in the administration. For this purpose as stated by Y[our] E[xcellency] the expedient most calculated to secure success and to command public confidence is not so much the introduction of theoretical changes of system, or limitations as regards the creed of highly placed officials, as the appointment of European experts of tried ability and integrity in the departments of Justice and Finance and of a certain number of carefully selected European officers to reorganise the Gendarmerie and police. The presence of such officers in the disturbed districts would not only be a considerable guarantee against the recurrence of acts of cruelty and oppression but would give far better opportunities than at present exist for examining and checking the exaggerated reports of outrages which are now disseminated by both sides for the purpose of inflaming public opinion. It is of course obvious that without adequate financial arrangements for the payment of the various branches of the administration no reforms can be carried into practical effect.

These are the salient points on which H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] think it necessary to lay stress. I gather from Y[our] E[xcellency's] despatch No. 567 of the 29th ult[imo] that the views of your colleagues, though cautiously expressed, do not materially differ from your own. From the reports which have reached me from other capitals I am led to believe that the attention of the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernments] has equally been directed to the necessity of immediate improvement in the administration of the European provinces of Turkey. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] await with interest the communication which they are given to understand will shortly be made to the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin as to the result of the recent conference between Count Lamsdorff and Count Goluchowski. The position of Austria-Hungary and Russia gives to those States special opportunities of observation and influence in the Balkan Peninsula and H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] will be ready to give their best support to any practical suggestions which the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg may wish to press upon the Porte with the object of affording a remedy for the present evils.

In my despatch to H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Vienna of the 6th ins[tant] (of which Y[our] E[xcellency] will receive a copy) I have given an account of some observations which I made on that day to the Austrian-Hungarian Ambassador in reference to the Macedonian question.⁽¹⁾

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

On February 17th, 1903, the Austrian and Russian Ambassadors in London communicated a résumé of the scheme of reforms (subsequently referred to as the "Vienna Scheme"), which was the outcome of the conference between Count Lamsdorff and Count Goluchowski at Vienna, and which it was proposed to recommend to the Sultan.

The résumé was as follows.⁽²⁾

No. 3. Ann.

Project for reforms in Macedonia.

(Communicated by Count Deym.)

F.O. Austria 1347.

February 17, 1903.

Les Gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie étant animés du désir sincère de voir écartées les causes des troubles qui se produisent depuis quelque temps dans les Vilayets de Salonique, de Kossovo et de Monastir, sont persuadés que ce but ne saurait être atteint que par l'application de réformes tendant à améliorer les conditions des populations des dits Vilayets.

Ainsi qu'il résulte des communications adressées récemment par la Sublime Porte aux Ambassadeurs résidant à Constantinople, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman a reconnu lui-même la nécessité d'aviser aux moyens de renforcer l'action des lois et de réprimer les abus.

Il a été entre autres recommandé à toutes les autorités [sic] des Vilayets en question "d'assurer et de maintenir dans les provinces la confiance et la tranquillité [sic], d'adopter toutes les dispositions efficaces propres à empêcher que des vexations et des méfaits soient commis par les uns au

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch and the preceding one were published in *A. & P.* (1903), LXXXVII, pp. 572-3.]

⁽²⁾ [The full text in French is substituted here for the English résumé; this and the similar German résumé were published in *A. & P.* (1903), LXXXVII, pp. 579-81.]

détriment des autres, de garantir également les biens, la vie et l'honneur des habitants chrétiens, d'arrêter ceux qui se livreraient à des actes contraires à ces principes et de leur infliger sans retard la punition qu'ils auraient légalement encourue et de ne rien négliger pour que les fonctionnaires qui feraient preuve d'inattention ou de manque d'énergie dans l'accomplissement de leurs devoirs soient immédiatement destitués et mis sous jugement."

Un Inspecteur Général du rang de Vésir, a été en outre désigné pour surveiller la stricte observation pour les différentes autorités des devoirs qui leur incombent ainsi que l'application de toutes les dispositions récemment décrétées et dont la compétence s'étendra à toutes les affaires civiles, financières et autres du ressort de l'administration des trois Vilayets.

Tout en prenant acte des dispositions ci-dessus exposées, les Gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie croient que, dans l'intérêt du maintien de la tranquillité et de l'ordre dans les trois Vilayets il est de la plus haute importance de compter les règlements nouvellement arrêtés et d'introduire simultanément dans l'administration des susdits Vilayets des améliorations tendant à assurer un fonctionnement plus régulier et plus efficace des institutions locales.

Dans cet ordre d'idée les gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie sont tombés d'accord sur la nécessité de recommander au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman l'application des dispositions suivantes.

I. *Inspecteur Général.*

Pour assurer le succès de la mission confiée à l'Inspecteur Général, il est de la plus haute importance que ce dignitaire soit maintenu à son poste durant une période de trois ans. Vu l'intérêt qui se rattache à sa mission, les Gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie désireraient obtenir du Gouvernement Ottoman la promesse que l'Inspecteur Général ne sera pas révoqué avant l'expiration de ce délai sans que les deux Gouvernements soient préalablement consultés à ce sujet.

Il est non moins important que l'Inspecteur Général obtienne la faculté *de se servir* en cas de nécessité, des troupes Ottomanes sur toute l'étendue des trois Vilayets sans être obligé d'avoir recours chaque fois au Gouvernement central.

II. *Valis.*

Il est bien entendu que les Valis des trois Vilayets seront tenus à se conformer strictement aux instructions émanant de l'Inspecteur Général et de contribuer par tous les moyens en leur pouvoir au succès de sa mission.

III. *Police et Gendarmerie.*

La réorganisation de la police et de la gendarmerie entreprise par le Gouvernement Ottoman ne saurait être accomplie avec succès qu'à la condition que des spécialistes étrangers soient chargés d'y concourir et d'en établir les bases. Ces spécialistes seraient hiérarchiquement soumis au Gouvernement Ottoman.

Le Gouvernement Ottoman semble avoir décidé que les chrétiens ne seraient admis au service dans la gendarmerie que dans la proportion de vingt pour cent. Tout en tenant compte des circonstances locales qui ont motivé cette restriction les Gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie croient qu'elle ne saurait être maintenue comme règle permanente et que le Gouvernement Ottoman aura à aviser aux moyens de faire appliquer le principe en vertu duquel le chiffre des musulmans et des chrétiens employés dans la gendarmerie serait proportionnel [sic] au chiffre des populations musulmane et non-musulmane.

Les chefs de la gendarmerie dans les Vilayets devront être choisis dans l'avenir parmi [sic] les officiers dont le service antérieur soit de nature à offrir des garanties de leur capacité et de leur caractère moral.

Les mêmes principes devront être appliqués à la réorganisation de la police.

Aux termes de l'article 8 des "Instructions concernant les Vilayets de la Turquie d'Europe" les commissaires et les agents de la police, recrutés parmi les musulmans et les chrétiens, seraient tenus de savoir lire et écrire le turc.

Le nombre des chrétiens pouvant satisfaire à cette condition étant fort restreint, il y aurait lieu de l'abroger.

IV. *Gardes-Champêtres.*

Les gardes-champêtres devront être choisis parmi les habitants des villages; ils le seront parmi les chrétiens là où la majorité de la population est chrétienne.

V. *Arnaoutes.*

Les vexations et les excès auxquels les arnaoutes ne se livrent que trop souvent à l'égard des chrétiens, ainsi que l'impunité de leurs méfaits et crimes constituant une des principales causes de l'état de trouble et d'insécurité qui règne dans les Vilayets, il est urgent que le Gouvernement Ottoman avisât sans retard aux moyens d'astreindre la population arnaoute au respect des lois.

VI. *Amnistie.*

De nombreuses arrestations ayant été opérées dans les Vilayets européens à la suite des troubles dont les Vilayets ont été le théâtre, il est urgent que pour ramener [*sic*] le calme dans les esprits, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman s'empresse d'accorder une amnistie à tous les accusés ou condamnés pour des faits politiques, qui ne seraient pas convaincus de participation directe à des crimes de droit commun, ainsi qu'à ceux qui à la suite des mêmes événements ont émigrés.

Tous les procès pour crimes ou délits de droit commun, actuellement en cours d'instruction ou de jugement, devraient être réglés sans retard.

VII. *Finances.*

Pour assurer le fonctionnement régulier des institutions locales et pour alléger les charges qui pèsent sur les populations sans pourtant augmenter les ressources de l'Etat, il s'agirait de décréter ce qui suit :

Au commencement de l'année un budget des revenus et des dépenses sera dressé dans chaque Vilayet.

Le produit des impôts sera destiné en premier lieu à pourvoir aux besoins de l'administration locale, le payement des services civil et militaire y compris.

La perception des dimes se fera par voie d'affermage. L'affermage en gros est aboli et sera remplacé par la mise en adjudication par village et au nom des habitants. En cas de difficultés, ceux-ci pourront recourir aux tribunaux. Dans le cas où personne ne se présenterait pour l'affermage des dimes de certains villages, ou bien si le prix offert était inférieur à la valeur réelle des dimes à adjuger, ces dimes seront administrées en régie, conformément au règlement sur la matière.

Tous les revenus du Vilayet doivent être versés dans la caisse du Vilayet, tenue à l'agence de la Banque Impériale Ottomane au chef-lieu du Vilayet.

Le payement des sommes affectées par le budget aux dépenses du Vilayet se fera en conformité d'un règlement spécial qui aura également pour objet d'assurer la régularité de l'emploi de ces sommes.

The observations made by Lord Lansdowne on this scheme are recorded in the following despatch to Sir F. Plunkett and similar observations were made to the Russian Ambassador :—

No. 4. Ann.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Plunkett.

F.O. Austria 1837.

(No. 23.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 17, 1903.

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador called upon me to-day and left with me a memorandum of which a copy is enclosed containing an account of the scheme of reforms which the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts intend to recommend to the Sultan for adoption in Macedonia.

Count Deym explained to me that the scheme was for the moment communicated to us in strict confidence and the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t earnestly desired that its contents should not be made public until it had been presented to the Sultan. The two Powers hoped to be able to do this on the 19th instant, and they trusted that His Majesty's Government would give them at once some indication of their attitude.

In reply to an observation of mine Count Deym admitted that His Majesty's Government could scarcely be expected to commit themselves finally with regard to a scheme which they had had no sufficient opportunity of examining. He went on to say that for the moment all that was desired was that we should give our consent to those portions of it which related to the most urgently necessary steps for ameliorating the situation in the three vilayets. Such consent on our part would be without prejudice to any supplementary modifications (compléments) which might eventually be found necessary should experience show that the original proposals were insufficient.

After listening to His Excellency's remarks I made to him a statement to the following effect which I afterwards communicated to him in writing.

[1.] His Majesty's Government have for a long time past been deeply convinced of the necessity for the introduction of measures of practical reform in Macedonia. They have constantly urged the adoption of such reforms upon the Turkish Government.

2. The present situation in the Balkan Peninsula is such that any further delay in the introduction of such reforms might be fraught with the most disastrous consequences.

3. His Majesty's Government had obviously not had time in which to examine with the care it deserves the scheme put forward by the two Powers. If however they were to put forward

an alternative scheme of their own the discussions which would arise would certainly involve delay for which His Majesty's Government would, in some measure at all events be responsible.

4. The scheme of the two Powers, so far as we understand it, contains some features which would probably find a place in any scheme of reform which the Powers would be likely to support.

5. His Majesty's Government are therefore prepared to accept it in principle and, subject to the reservations which follow, to recommend it to the Sultan for his acceptance.

6. They reserve however to themselves the right of recommending to the Powers any modifications which may suggest themselves after the scheme has been further examined and discussed.

7. They desire in particular to have it understood that their provisional acceptance of the scheme will not, in the event of its disappointing the expectations of its framers and proving inadequate as a remedy be regarded by His Majesty's Government as precluding them from putting forward or supporting, either during the three years tenure of the Inspector-General, or at any future time alternative proposals with the same object.

They earnestly trust that neither Austria-Hungary, nor Russia nor indeed any of the signatory Powers, will, at this juncture use language or take action which might unnecessarily hamper their freedom of action hereafter or render it difficult to effect changes either in the scheme itself or in the *personnel* of the administration, if during the next three years experience should prove that such changes are desirable.

[I am, &c.
LANSDOWNE.]

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A pp[rove]d.—E.R.

Sir N. O'Connor, in accordance with instructions supported the scheme which was presented by the Russian and Austrian Ambassadors to the Porte on the 21st February.

The French, Italian and German Ambassadors also supported the scheme.

It was formally accepted by the Turkish Government; the Sultan promised that the suggestions would be faithfully carried out, and Regulations for their execution were issued.

Instructions were sent to the Austrian and Russian Consuls to watch the execution of reforms and the British Consuls were directed to keep in communication with their Austrian and Russian colleagues and to give them their assistance and support.

Sir N. O'Connor,
March 4, 1903, and
March 6, 1903.

Sir N. O'Connor;
March 24, 1903.

** [[The following documents show the impression produced on the different Powers by the *démarche* of the 21st February.

No. 5. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. Turkey 5272.

Tel. (No. 36.)

Foreign Office, February 20, 1903

My Tel[egram] No. 33.

In accordance with assurances given by me to Austrian and Russian Amb[assado]rs you are authorized to recommend that the scheme of reform should be accepted at once in principle subject to examination of its details which should be proceeded with as promptly as possible.

It would be most desirable that we should so far as possible act in accord with the other Powers Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin and you should endeavour to learn exact nature of instructions which have been received by their Rep[resentati]ves.

No. 6. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Plunkett.

F.O. Austria 1337.

(No. 25.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 20, 1903.

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador called at the F[oreign] O[ffice] to-day and informed Sir E. Barrington that he was instructed to convey Count Goluchowski's thanks to H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t for having assented in principle to the scheme of Reforms for the three Vilayets and for the support which they had undertaken to give to it at Constantinople.

There was no doubt that the initiative taken by the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments in the matter would not prevent H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t from suggesting modifications of the scheme in the future or changes in "le personnel administratif" if experience should make such changes seem desirable to them.

Count Deym went on to say that Count Goluchowski would be grateful if any communication to Parliament on the subject could be postponed until the Sultan had accepted the scheme; he would then like to be confidentially informed of the nature of the statement that would be made.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 7. Ed. Add.

Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. France 3618.

(No. 96.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Paris, D. February 20, 1903.

R. February 21, 1903.

Monsieur Delcassé spoke to me briefly the day before yesterday respecting the condition of Macedonia, and the representations which Austria and Russia were about to make at Constantinople for its amelioration.

His Excellency said that he preferred to consider this question not so much from the political as from the humanitarian point of view. In fact it would be highly expedient that the political aspects of the question should be absolutely excluded. The condition of the inhabitants in general was such that it sufficed to invoke on their behalf the elementary principles of justice and of the right of every man to work for his livelihood and to enjoy the fruits of his labour in tranquillity and without molestation.

The recommendations upon which the two Powers above referred to had come to an agreement, and which had just been communicated to him, seemed based upon these principles, and to be likely to commend themselves to the united support of the other European Governments. He hoped that this would be the case, and that the Sultan would find himself face to face with the unanimity of European Opinion.

I said that, without knowing the details of the Austro-Russian Memorandum I could not conceive it likely to be one which would fail to receive the general approval of His Majesty's Government; who would certainly share His Excellency's views as to the urgency, on humanitarian grounds, of taking some steps to ameliorate the situation in Macedonia. From the political point of view the mixture of nationalities in the population of the Province rendered the definite solution no easy question; and I therefore quite understood why His Excellency had said that it was for the moment expedient to eliminate such considerations from the action to be taken, as far as it might be found possible to do so.

I have, &c.

EDMUND MONSON.

No. 8. Ed. Add.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Pera, February 23, 1903.

F.O. Turkey 5272.

D. 8-20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 36.)

R. 10-30 P.M.

I told Grand Vizier to-day that His Majesty's Government supported the scheme of reforms in Macedonia presented to the Porte on Saturday by the Austrian and Russian Ambassador [sic], and that they hoped they would be accepted and put into effective execution without delay.

His Highness replied that a mazbata of the Council of Ministers reported in their favour yesterday, and that an Imperial Iradé accepting them without modifications had already been issued.

(Confidential.)

Sultan seems to have expected some more drastic proposals, and to have been agreeably surprised by those presented.⁽¹⁾ He has shown his usual cleverness in accepting them without waiting for expiration of the three or four days' delay accorded, but whether he is acting from fear, or in the hope of being able to stultify them subsequently, it is difficult to say.

⁽¹⁾ [See Sultan's enquiries at Berlin, Baron von Marschall to German Foreign Office, 19 Feb. 1903, G.P. XVIII, I, pp. 240-1.]

The two Ambassadors do not apparently contemplate appointing, at all events at present, any supervising (? Committee), and rely upon the information they receive from the foreign Consuls to judge whether effect is really being given to the promises of the Porte.

No. 9. Ed. Add.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5265.
(No. 168.)

Constantinople, D. April 4, 1903.

My Lord,

R. April 13, 1903.

I had the honour of being received in audience yesterday by the Sultan after the Selamlık.

His Majesty referred to the recent incidents at Mitrovitza and to the difficult position in which he was placed by this sudden and tempestuous outbreak. He said he intended to send a special commission composed of Zia Nouredin Bey and several Ulemas to explain to the leaders of the insurrection that the reforms would not in any way prejudice their interests, that Rayahs had been employed from time immemorial in the service of the State not only throughout the provinces but also in the capital, and that it was their duty to obey his orders in this respect. The Albanians were a proud and independent race, and if he wounded their *amour-propre* they would become still more intractable. He believed, however, they would yield to his exhortations and advice; but, if they refused to do so, he would be compelled to employ coercion.

I expressed the hope that the measures taken by His Majesty would be successful as it was in his own interest to suppress the lawlessness of his subjects without delay and to restore tranquillity in those parts in order that steps could be taken for the introduction of the reforms so urgently needed.

I then referred to the state of the Gendarmerie, the accounts of which showed a far from satisfactory condition of affairs; the places of the incompetent men, who had been dismissed to make room for Christians and others, had not been filled, and I regretted that no measures had been taken since I last had the honour of discussing this subject with His Imperial Majesty in December towards the reorganisation of this most important branch of the executive, either by securing the services of experienced Turkish officers, or by the engagement of Foreign Instructors and Inspectors.

I ventured also to point out that the engagement of two Swedish officers would scarcely be sufficient to convince the Powers that Turkey was really in earnest in taking measures to secure that maintenance of order which was such a necessary preliminary to the successful introduction of the promised reforms.

To these remarks His Majesty replied that it was impossible to engage a considerable number of foreigners while the Roumelian provinces were so disturbed; that he could not even succeed in enlisting native Christians. This state of things was due to the criminal activity of the Bulgarian Committees and insurrectionary bands whose object was to promote anarchy and disorder and keep the country in a state of confusion, which they hoped would eventually assist their political aims. His first duty was to restore public order. He was doing all that lay in his power, but he promised that when the proper time came he would not lose sight of the representations I had made to him and which he believed were in the interests of Turkey.

Previous to my audience I had some conversation with the Russian Ambassador, who asked me to earnestly impress upon His Majesty the necessity of immediately bringing the Albanians in Old Servia to their senses so that the Reforms could be put into execution in the Vilayet of Kossovo as well as in other parts of Roumelia.

His Excellency added that he would not fail to make representations respecting the reorganisation of the Gendarmerie which he regarded as a matter of the most urgent importance.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 10. Ed. Add.

Sir G. Bonham to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 148.

(No. 68.)

Belgrade, D. April 18, 1903.

My Lord,

R. April 23, 1903.

The Turkish Minister alluded to-day to the change of tone which he said had been adopted by the English Press in dealing with the affairs of Macedonia. His attention had been called to it by Hilmi Pacha who had, I understand been obliged to refuse permission to a correspondent to examine prisoners in the gaol which the correspondent considered a great grievance.

On my saying that some at all events of the accounts published in the English Press were taken from Russian sources such as the "Novoe Vremye[a]"—He replied that he did not complain of the Russian Press which was engaged in carrying on a propaganda which applied to some extent to the French Press but the English Press which was generally impartial had not in the present case been so. He particularly took exception to a statement which had been published to the effect that the Turkish troops when attacking the Bulgarians placed Bulgarian women and children in front adding that this device had in fact been adopted by the Macedonian bands and that it had enabled Sarafoff to make his escape.

As regards our Newspapers I replied that the extreme liberty they enjoyed made them independent of official control and that during our recent war there was a section which openly espoused the cause of the enemy. As regards Macedonia however there were many newspapers who were fully alive to the excesses committed by the Bulgarian Committees. Correspondents were naturally influenced by the views of those into whose society they fell, and if these happened to be members of Macedonian Committees their judgment would no doubt be warped.

I mentioned however that there had been incidents at Razlog which appeared to require explanation adding that if the Turkish troops were to behave in the same exemplary manner as in the war of 1897 with Greece, Turkey could afford to disregard any calumnious statements.

In the course of further conversation His Excellency expressed himself as sanguine that the number of troops twenty-six battalions now in the Country would prevent any serious outbreak, and that Hilmi Pacha was about to receive additional support in carrying out the reforms by the appointment of a Supreme Military Commander who would be empowered to move troops from one Vilayet to another without previous reference at Constantinople.

I have, &c.

G. F BONHAM.

No. 11. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Scott.

F.O. Russia 1658.

(No. 96.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 22, 1903.

O[un]t Benckendorff expressed to me in conversation to-day the pleasure wh[ic]h it gave him to hear that our Amb[assado]r at Constantinople had been instructed to support the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Ambassadors in their recent representation to the Porte on the subject of the Macedonian reforms. . . .⁽¹⁾

H[is] E[xc]cellency then again dwelt upon the importance of a good understanding between Russia and Great Britain in regard to our policy in the near East. He thought it most desirable that people in both countries should become accustomed to the idea that the two Powers could work together amicably in that part of the world. . . .⁽²⁾

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].]] **

In April 1903 serious disturbances occurred in Albania where the population resisted the reforms. At the same time the Bulgarian Committee bands recommenced their incursions and dynamite outrages occurred at Salonica. The Russian Consul at Mitrovitza was attacked and subsequently died of his wounds. No progress was made in carrying out reforms notably in regard to the establishment of a gendarmerie under European officers. The Austrian and Russian Ambassadors consequently made a fresh representation to the Porte demanding some action on the part of the Turkish Government to prove the sincerity of their promises and threatening, if this was not done, to withdraw the guarantee previously given for the conduct of the Balkan States.

This representation was supported by His Majesty's Ambassador.

Sir N. O'Connor,
April 22, 1903.

No. 12. Ed. Add.

** [[*Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne.*

F.O. Russia 1660.

(No. 162.) Confidential.

My Lord,

St. Petersburg. D. June 10, 1903.

R. June 15, 1903.

I had some conversation with Count Lamsdorff on the 3rd instant on the situation in the Balkans, and His Excellency explained his views to me very clearly and fully.

(1) [Two paragraphs relating to Crete are here omitted.]

(2) [The rest of the despatch relates to the Bagdad railway.]

As regarded the change of Ministry at Sofia and the mission of M. Nachevitch [*sic*] to Constantinople, Count Lamsdorff said that as it was a question of acts rather than of persons, it mattered little to Russia what Ministry was in power at Sofia so long as they followed a correct policy during the present crisis.

The Bulgarian Government had not addressed any communication to the Russian Government in connection with M. Natchevitch's mission to Constantinople, but the Bulgarian Agent has assured him in reply to an enquiry, that its sole object was to clear up misunderstanding, establish conciliatory relations with the Porte, and assure the Sultan of Prince Ferdinand's loyal desire to co-operate in the task of pacification. In this case Count Lamsdorff said that he was prepared to extend his benediction with both hands to M. Natchevitch's mission, but it remained to be seen how the Sultan would take any overture from his vassal to assist in pacifying his own subjects.

M. Stancioff had evidently disclaimed for his Government any idea of wishing to thrust themselves in between Russia and Austria and substitute alternative proposals of reform for those recommended by the Powers.

Count Lamsdorff said that the conflicting reports of what had occurred at Smerdesch in the vicinity of Monastir had obliged the Russian and Austrian Governments to insist on a thorough and impartial enquiry being undertaken by a Special Commission.

The Turks persisted in emphatically denying the assertions in Consular Reports that there had been any massacre of Bashi Bazouks there, and he was not aware that any of the Consuls pretended to have been eye-witnesses of the reported massacre, and they could only have reported on hearsay evidence, which experience taught was not trustworthy in those districts.

Count Lamsdorff said that the Sultan deserved great credit for the energy displayed in successfully breaking down the insurrection of the Albanians, for the task set him, considering the influences surrounding the Palace, was by no means easy or devoid of personal danger.

The Russian Government had been obliged to insist very firmly on the Sultan taking this action, as the best reparation which could be exacted for the murder of their Consul, M. Scherbina. He confessed to me that his position when that deplorable incident occurred was a very difficult one.

The murder of a Russian Consul⁽¹⁾ had to be avenged in an exemplary manner, but he had to consider at the same time the fact that the tradition of hereditary blood-vendettas was deeply-rooted among the Albanians, and that the execution of the perpetrator of an isolated murder might have very far-reaching consequences, increase the Sultan's difficulties, and encourage hopes of ultimate foreign intervention.

He decided therefore on insisting that the full death penalty should be passed on the murderer, and then at the special intervention of the Emperor of Russia, the capital penalty was by an act of grace commuted into life-long imprisonment; but this intervention was accompanied by a positive condition that the Sultan should effectively punish and suppress the Albanian insurrection and their resistance to the execution of the reforms.

Count Lamsdorff then explained very fully to me the attitude which he had from the first advised the Emperor to take up in regard to the agitation in the Balkans.

He said that when the situation became threatening, and particularly at the time of the Shipka celebrations last year when dangerous speeches were made—he would not particularise the speakers or occasions—he determined he would not allow—as far as he could prevent it—the mistakes of 1876 and 1877 to be repeated, when for lack of timely decision on the part of Prince Gortchakoff, a wave of popular feeling, fed by various influences, was allowed to grow beyond the power of control and force the Government into active intervention in the Turkish provinces.

He had a very lively recollection of those days and of the scenes at the railway station of St. Petersburg, when wives, mothers, and children crowded round to take a last leave of thousands sent to give their lives, not for the defence of their country, or for its own interests, but to carve out independent states for kindred races in the Balkan Peninsula.

He trusted that he was not less humane or sensible than others to the oppression of the Slav races in Turkey, but while cosmopolitan humanity and philanthropy were noble and legitimate incentives to voluntary efforts and sacrifices on the part of individuals, statesmen responsible for the issues of war and peace and for the lives and treasure of the people entrusted to their care had no right to command the sacrifice of the latter in a foreign intervention on purely philanthropic grounds.

His decision was quickened on hearing of a remark made by some deputies from an agitating committee to the effect that it did not matter what attitude the Great Powers took up at first towards the agitation, because, whether they willed it or not, they could be compelled by the acts of the committees and popular opinion to intervene actively later on.

(1) [At Mitrovitza.]

This report reached him when he was at Livadia, and he at once went to the Emperor and laid before His Majesty the necessity of facing the danger at once, and he got the Emperor's sanction to going himself to Belgrade and Sofia, and there announcing firmly and clearly, as His Majesty's Foreign Minister, that Russia would not allow herself to be drawn on any pretext into armed intervention in the Balkans, or again sacrifice Russian lives and treasure to further the aims of the agitators against Turkish rule.

At his visit to Vienna he was able to establish a thorough understanding with the Austro-Hungarian Government for identic action, and armed with this he could turn a deaf ear to all the numerous and influential appeals, and even reproaches, with which he had been assailed in quarters which hoped to see Russia following the same path as she had taken 25 years ago.

He had succeeded in breaking the wave of popular excitement in Russia which had been allowed to get beyond control in 1877, and by doing so, he thought he had rendered a greater service to humanity and peace than if he had actively sympathised with the oppressed Christians in Turkey, for the smaller states as well as the centres of agitation had once more learned the salutary lesson that it was not in their power to shape for their own ends the policy of the greater Powers, and let loose at will their enormous military powers, but that they must look for the realisation of their aims by peaceful means or else at their own risk and peril.

Count Lamsdorff was of opinion that this conviction had now been brought home to the minds not only of the Balkan Governments, but also the revolutionary Committees, by seeing that neither the Salonica outrages nor the murder of a Russian Consul, nor reports of massacres of Christians could move the Russian Government a hair's breadth from its decided position. It was on consideration of this conviction more than of any other symptom that he looked for an early termination of the present troubles and ultimate acquiescence in the proposed reforms as the only remedy attainable by pacific means.

I may say that on the day following this conversation with Count Lamsdorff, I received a visit from the Servian Minister, M. Novakovitch, who is awaiting the acceptance by his Government of his request to be recalled and allowed to retire into private life.

M. Novakovitch said that the early termination of the insurrection in the Balkans might be confidently expected, not because the harvesting season was approaching, as some had thought, because there were no crops left to harvest, but simply and solely on account of the conviction that nothing would induce the Great Powers to intervene, and that without such intervention, which had been confidently counted on, successful insurrection was impossible.

He said that he had lived to realise bitterly the mistake which Servia had made in 1876 and 1877. She had dreamed of a revived great Servian Kingdom, and though she had gained the semblance of independence, she was more hemmed in and cut off from her ambition now than she had been under Turkish rule.

I have, &c.

CHARLES S. SCOTT.

No. 13. Ed. Add.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5268.

(No. 521.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Therapia, D. August 28, 1903.

R. September 2, 1903.

Since I had last the honour of addressing Your Lordship on the situation of affairs in Macedonia the reports which have come in from several quarters indicate a distinct and very grave aggravation of the political situation throughout the entire Balkan Peninsula, and to some extent in the capital itself. It is unnecessary to repeat to Your Lordship the series of incidents which have led to this state of things as they are recorded in detail in my other despatches, and I will endeavour to confine myself in this despatch to the main issues at stake.

There is no doubt that the exasperation of the Moslem population here as well as in other parts of Turkey is growing apace and that there is a large and daily increasing number of Turks who are of opinion that it would be better to put their fate even to the test of war than risk to lose their European possessions by the slow process of physical material and financial exhaustion. They would long since have thrown the die and declared war against Bulgaria whom they recognise as the cause and fountain-source of all their present trials, were it not for fear of Russia and a belief that they may lose not only the fruits of their victory but a great deal more if they venture upon hostilities. Things are shaping themselves so that while they are hesitating in their warlike policy they are inevitably drifting down that way.

I believe the Ottoman forces now in Macedonia are equal to those of the Turco-Russian war of 1877-78. In addition to the 200,000 at present under arms the Government is mobilising the remainder of three complete Army Corps and although the discipline of the army has so far been relatively well maintained, it is difficult to believe that it will be so and that the danger of outrages and excesses will not be extreme when the mass of the Forces in the field is composed of reservists, Ilaves and Bashi Bazouks, who have had hardly any military training, and who are sure to be ill fed and ill paid. Bulgarian statesmen have never hesitated to admit that under certain eventualities they would be compelled to interfere and take up arms on behalf of their Macedonian brothers. They evidently had in their mind the identical eventualities which the mobilisation of the Turkish army is sure eventually to produce. If Bulgaria moves Serbia can hardly stand still without forfeiting her claims to old Servia, and I consider she is more apt to join than to attack Bulgaria.

It is my opinion that Russia would gladly avoid by every means in her power the danger of complications in the Near East. She can afford to look with complacency at the increasing exhaustion of the Ottoman Empire which is taking place without her moving a regiment or spending a rouble. But she cannot afford either to let Bulgaria win her own military laurels or be beaten. A striking proof of the jealousy with which she maintains this policy is shown by the fact that when Monsieur Natchevitch was sent here to negotiate directly with the Sultan she did not hesitate to intimate to the Porte that she could not regard favourably a direct understanding between the vassal and the Suzerain Power. Looking back over the last twelve months I confess it is difficult to explain or understand Russia's complicated and tortuous policy, but I think it safe to say that she has, to a certain extent, been surprised by the force and vitality of the revolutionary movement and by the energy and resources of the Macedonian Committees. Austria has been dragged in her wake, but there are certain facts and incidents of her policy which are curiously puzzling unless it be assumed there is an understanding between the two Powers in regard to the Balkan Peninsula which goes farther than is known to the Diplomatic Chanceries of the Western Powers. But whatever be the ends and policy of the two Powers I think it is safe to assume that the platonic attitude of the St. Petersburg cabinet will not be tolerated by the Pan-Slavist Committees if it results in the murderous repression of the Macedonian insurrection by Moslem troops, and if driven to desperation they will know no other methods.

Many other considerations and factors in connection with the present situation cross my mind but it is not necessary to dwell upon them. There is however a special feature of the situation which I know is regarded by one of my colleagues, and certainly not the least intelligent among them, as a grave and possibly not a very remote danger, namely that the Sultan may be overwhelmed by the fanaticism of his Moslem subjects and have to choose between siding with them or losing his throne and life. Personally I do not share these grave apprehensions but it is not well to lose sight of the possibility of events occurring here which would produce a state of anarchy that would invite and probably entail Russian intervention at very short notice.

There are however in the situation considerations of a more specific character to which I would venture to call Your Lordship's attention.

It is evident that the Austro-Russian scheme of reforms is dead and that even if it could be revived it would no longer answer to the requirements of the situation or have the faintest chance of pacifying the Macedonians. Some more drastic and active measures would have to be enforced in one way or another if incalculable misery is to be avoided and the Balkan Peninsula is not to become a scene of desolation, of starving and famine-stricken inhabitants. The Russian and Austrian Ambassadors must be ready to acknowledge to-day that their scheme has been a ghastly failure, and that something else must be substituted without delay if European complications are to be avoided. Indeed, it would be surprising if the Russian Government is not already considering the subject.

There is no reason however, as the question appears to me, for desiring to take the lead out of the hands of the two Powers who by their geographical position and their affinities of race and creed are primarily interested in the affairs of the Balkan Peninsula. The time however has arrived when the other Powers may properly be expected to make their voices heard and to let it be understood by the two Powers that they consider it is necessary to propose more drastic and thorough reforms so as to secure for the Macedonians a charter of such a liberal description as will satisfy their legitimate aspirations and conquer the grave dangers now threatening those parts and the peace of Europe.

I have ventured to state in a previous despatch⁽¹⁾ that the Sultan did not seem to me to be very far from the point when in order to surmount the troubles and difficulties

(1) [No. 491 of August 18, 1903. Not reproduced.]

with which he is beset, he might be induced to accept at all events a moderate régime of autonomy, if presented under a form which would cover his prestige while securing the reality. Your Lordship will recollect that when I advised His Majesty in December last to associate with Hussein Hilmi Pasha a Christian colleague, to organise the Gendarmerie and Police under foreign officers and to appoint foreign advisers to each important Administration and judicial Department in the Vilayets of Macedonia, His Majesty did not say anything to show that he had insuperable objections to these proposals. They went a good deal farther than the Russian scheme and they fell to the ground with its initiation and the want of support from the other Powers.

In this connection it is interesting to notice the official programme of the Macedonian Revolutionary Committee as presented early this month to the foreign Representatives at Sofia. The demands of the Delegates are:—

1. The nomination with the assent of the great Powers of a Christian Governor-General, who has never belonged to the Ottoman Administration and who will be independent of the Sublime Porte in the exercise of his functions; and,
2. The institution of an international permanent collective Board of Control vested with full penal powers.

No doubt these proposals deprive the Sultan of many of his sovereign rights and privileges but his resistance will be lessened by the dangers with which he is now surrounded and by the prospect of preserving the integrity of his Empire in Europe while it will probably be entirely overcome under due pressure of the Powers and without recourse to coercive measures. Some solution of this sort would probably be a better guarantee for the integrity of the Ottoman Empire than a continuance of the present troubles in Macedonia with the attendant danger of war. That it would be viewed by the Sultan as a friendly proposal is hardly to be expected but there is little doubt that it would, if speedily put into execution, be accepted by Bulgaria as a satisfactory settlement. I quite realise the difficulty of handling the question so as to offer the greatest chance of success. On the one hand if His Majesty's Government were to make officially any general proposals of the sort Russia would probably resent the Slav population of Macedonia receiving their charter of liberty from another Power, while on the other hand if we do nothing under present circumstances we shall seem to be abdicating our traditional policy and the responsibility which falls upon us in virtue of past treaties.

Events may at any moment take such a turn that Your Lordship may desire to be placed in possession of my views, and I have therefore made bold to submit these observations to your Lordship.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A very good Dispatch.—E.R.

No. 14. Ed. Add.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5268.

(No. 522.)

My Lord,

Constantinople, D. August 28, 1903.

R. September 2, 1903.

I have the honour to forward to your Lordship herewith a despatch⁽¹⁾ from the Military Attaché to His Majesty's Embassy, reporting the precautions taken by the Turkish authorities against a Russian descent on Constantinople, and the present military situation in Macedonia.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.]] **

In May, June and July no progress whatever was made and the situation became more and more critical. A new Bulgarian Ministry came into office at the end of May under General Petroff who made an attempt to come to terms with the Porte, but the

⁽¹⁾ [The report is not produced being of a technical character, and is only referred to as illustrating the Turkish Government's fears.]

mission of Monsieur Natchovitz, who was sent to Constantinople for this purpose ended in failure. Serious outrages by Turkish troops took place at Smyrdes in the Vilayet of Monastir and the alleged concentration of Turkish troops on the frontiers of Bulgaria caused very strained relations between Bulgaria and the Porte and formed the subject of a Bulgarian Circular to the Powers. The behaviour of the Turkish regular and irregular troops was the subject of remonstrances to the Porte by the Russian and Austrian Ambassadors in July and at the beginning of August an insurrectionary outbreak occurred in the Vilayet of Monastir. The movement spread rapidly and the continued excesses both on the part of the insurgents and the Turkish troops caused Sir N. O'Connor to propose that the Military Attachés at Constantinople should accompany the Turkish troops as a restraining influence.

Sir N. O'Connor,
August 10, 1903.

The proposal was approved by His Majesty's Government. It was not however considered desirable by the Governments of Austria and Russia.

Sir N. O'Connor,
August 19, 1903.

A fresh element of trouble arose from the murder of the Russian Consul at Monastir by a Turkish sentry whom he was threatening for not saluting him. The Turks hastily complied with all the demands for satisfaction made by the Russian Government but the latter thought it right to send a squadron to the Coast North of Adrianople which resulted in the immediate outbreak of an insurrection in the district.

On September 12th a joint communication was made by the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Representatives in London in regard to the unsatisfactory nature of the situation, proposing that the Powers should make a declaration at Constantinople and Sofia of their adhesion to the Vienna programme and that neither Turkey nor Bulgaria should count on their support in case of resistance to the realization of the scheme.

To Austro-
Hungarian
Minister,
September 19, 1903.

To this communication Lord Lansdowne replied at length stating that the time had come when in the opinion of His Majesty's Government the Vienna scheme of reform should be remodelled on a wider basis, and promising representations at Constantinople and Sofia in the sense desired by Austria and Russia. He added that His Majesty's Government would also represent to the Turkish Government that the Vienna scheme was the minimum of what was required, that, after due allowance for the difficulties of the situation, the steps taken to give effect to that scheme had been lamentably inadequate and that far prompter and more effective measures were necessary.⁽¹⁾ The proposal that Military Attachés should accompany the Turkish forces was also renewed. Sir N. O'Connor was instructed to make a declaration to the Porte in the sense of the concluding paragraphs of this reply. He did so on September 28th. (For these papers see Appendix I.)⁽²⁾

A few days previous to the Austro-Hungarian communication Sir N. O'Connor reported that he had made a strong representation to the Grand Vizier respecting the excesses committed by the Bashi Bazouks. His action was approved in a despatch dated September 21st in which also the general view taken by His Majesty's Government was described. (For these papers see Appendix II.)⁽²⁾

Mr. Elliot,
September 14, 1903.

On September 13th a Circular was addressed by the Bulgarian Government to the Powers urging them to use their influence at Constantinople to prevent the extermination of the Bulgarian population and the mobilization of the Turkish army on the Bulgarian frontier. It concluded by the statement that if Bulgaria did not receive satisfactory assurances she would be obliged to take the measures necessary to prepare herself for every eventuality and to secure herself from every surprise.

His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Sofia was instructed to reply to this Circular expressing in the strongest manner the hope of His Majesty's Government that Bulgaria would refrain from provocative language or action and giving assurances of the desire of His Majesty's Government to bring about remedial measures of the necessity of which they were convinced. (See Appendix III.)⁽²⁾

At this stage Count Lamsdorff went to Vienna in attendance on the Emperor of Russia and it was understood that the situation would be again discussed on the

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. G.P. XVIII, I, pp. 357-8.*]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. All these papers were published in *A. & P.* (1904), CX, (*Cd.* 1808), pp. 911-26, laid before Parliament October 1903.]

occasion of this visit. In anticipation of this Conference Lord Lansdowne on the 29th of September, instructed His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna to make certain suggestions to Count Goluchowski and Count Lamsdorff with a view of providing effective remedies for the condition of the country. These suggestions were as follows:

No. 15. Ann.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Plunkett.

F.O. Austria 1342.

Tel. (No. 89.)

Foreign Office, September 29, 1903.

Your telegram No. 75 of the 25th.

We have learned from both Austrian and Russian Governments that advantage will be taken of Count Lamsdorff's presence at Vienna in order to examine thoroughly the situation which now confronts the two Powers in the Balkan Peninsula.

We have, as you are aware, no desire to increase their difficulties or to press upon them inopportune proposals, but we feel sure that they will realise the necessity of providing some really effective measures to remedy the present condition of the country, and we desire to assure them of our support and to offer some suggestions. Count Lamsdorff has assured us that such suggestions would be willingly received.

The points which, in our view, the two Powers would do well to consider are the following:—

1. Whether the original scheme of reforms should not now be placed upon a broader basis. As to this, Count Lamsdorff's language to Sir C. Scott shows that H[is] E[xc]ellency does not exclude the idea of expanding the scheme. In our view no scheme is likely to produce satisfactory results which depends for its execution upon a Mussulman Governor entirely subservient to the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t and completely independent of foreign control. We suggest for consideration two alternatives.

(a.) appointment of a christian Governor unconnected with the Balkan Peninsula or with the Powers signatory of the Treaty of Berlin, or (b) retention of a Mussulman Governor assisted by European assessors. We should be content that these should be selected by the two Powers.

2. Whether Turkey should not be required to proceed at once to the appointment of European officers and non-commissioned officers in adequate numbers to take charge of the reorganisation of the gendarmerie.

If, as is to be hoped, some diminution of the prevailing disorder is to be expected, advantage should be taken of this period to proceed at once with the proposed reorganisation.

3. Whether the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t should not be required to withdraw from Macedonia the undisciplined troops, whether Redifs or Ilavehs, now employed there, and to retain only the regular troops. If this were done the latter might be transferred from positions at which their concentration has led to apprehensions of the invasion of Bulgaria by Turkey. The two Powers might in this case undertake that Bulgaria shall not send troops across the frontier, or allow bands to cross it.

4. We heard with regret that the two Powers do not regard favourably our proposal that the Powers should send their military attachés to accompany the Turkish forces. We adhere to this proposal, which has received the conditional support of the Italian Gov[ernmen]t, and we propose that each of the Powers should depute—say 6 officers for this purpose with the object of exercising a restraining influence upon the Turkish troops and obtaining trustworthy information.

5. We trust that the Powers will unanimously agree to obtain facilities for the distribution of relief to the persons, now numbering many thousands, who have been deprived of their homes in consequence of recent operations and are now scattered over the country in a condition of the greatest misery. Could it not be arranged that the persons engaged in the work shall wear some distinguishing mark and enjoy the same kind of immunity as the red cross?

You are instructed to speak in the sense of this telegram to Count Goluchowski and also to Count Lamsdorff.⁽³⁾

The suggestions were communicated by Sir F. Plunkett to the Austrian and Russian Ambassadors at Vienna on October 1st and on October 5th the Austrian and Russian Representatives in London informed Lord Lansdowne that the ideas of His Majesty's Government were in accordance with the decisions which had already been adopted by the Governments of Austria and Russia before their Ambassadors at Vienna had received the communication from Sir F. Plunkett. The decisions arrived at by the

To Sir F. Plunkett,
October 5, 1903.

⁽³⁾ [Published in A. & P. (1904), CX, p. 920.]

two Governments at Mürzsteg where the conferences had taken place would, it was stated, be sent in the form of identic instructions to their Ambassadors at Constantinople and be communicated to the other Powers as soon as they were definitely formulated.

Lord Lansdowne expressed the hope that no time would be lost in formulating these decisions and suggested that the proposals put forward by His Majesty's Government for the withdrawal of irregular troops and the appointment of officers to accompany the Turkish troops should be carried at once. He also dwelt upon the necessity of affording protection to persons engaged in the repatriation of the Macedonian villagers.

To Sir N. O'Connor,
October 6, 1903.

Sir N. O'Connor was instructed to use language in this sense to the Porte.

Preliminary instructions to the Austrian and Russian Ambassadors at Constantinople were sent after the Mürzsteg conferences and were published at Vienna on October 5th. They were as follows:—⁽⁴⁾

No. 16. Ann.

F.O. Austria 1341.

Vous avez été chargé récemment encore de déclarer que l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Russie persévèrent dans l'œuvre d'apaisement qu'elles ont entreprise et qu'elle maintiennent leur programme élaboré au commencement de l'année, malgré les difficultés qui jusqu'à présent se sont opposées à sa réalisation. Car en effet, tandis que d'un côté les comités révolutionnaires ont provoqué des troubles et empêché [sic] la population chrétienne des trois vilayets de prêter son concours à l'exécution des réformes, d'autre part les organes de la S[ublime] Porte chargés de les appliquer n'y ont pas apporté, en général, le zèle désirable et ne sont pas pénétrés de l'esprit qui a inspiré ces mesures.

Pour manifester leur ferme résolution d'insister sur l'exécution intégrale des dites réformes acceptées par la S[ublime] Porte et destinées à assurer la sécurité générale, les deux gouvernements sont convenus d'un mode plus efficace de contrôle et de surveillance. Vous recevrez sans retard des instructions précises à ce sujet.

Si les deux puissances reconnaissent pleinement le droit et le devoir de la S[ublime] Porte de réprimer les désordres fomentés par l'agitation séditeuse des comités, elles déplorent que cette répression ait été accompagnée d'excès et de cruautés dont les habitants paisibles ont eu à souffrir. Il leur paraît donc urgent de venir en aide aux victimes de ces faits regrettables et les instructions susmentionnées [sic] vous édifieront également sur les détails de l'action humanitaire qui s'impose aux fins de secourir la population privée de tout moyen d'existence, de faciliter son rapatriement et de pourvoir à la reconstruction des villages, églises et écoles incendiés.

Les Gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie ont le ferme espoir que leurs efforts constants atteindront le but d'amener un apaisement durable dans les provinces éprouvées et sont convaincus que leurs conseils empreints d'impartialité seront écoutés dans leur propre intérêt par tous ceux à qui ils s'adressent.

D'ordre de S[a] M[ajesté] I[mpériale] et R[oyale] apostolique, mon auguste maître, je Vous invite à communiquer ce qui précède au gouvernement Ottoman, après Vous être entendu avec Votre collègue de Russie qui reçoit des instructions identiques.

** [[ED. NOTE.—These three despatches briefly illustrate the French, German and Italian attitudes.

No. 17. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson.

F.O. France 3617.

(No. 529.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 21, 1903.

I mentioned to the French Amb[assado]r to-day my surprize at the delay which has taken place in the presentation of the revised scheme of reforms for Macedonia.

M. Cambon told me privately that he had had some conversation with M. Delcassé upon this subject. M. Delcassé had said that it was absolutely impossible for the French Gov[ernmen]t to join us officially in supporting proposals going beyond those which Austria and Russia might bring forward but that he could use his influence privately with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t: "Il pouvait causer avec les Russes." I said that I sincerely hoped that he would do so. We had no wish to put ourselves forward too

⁽⁴⁾ [The full text in French is substituted above for the English version; both are published in A. & P. (1904), CX, p. 924. The French text as given above was published in the *Fremdenblatt* of October 5, 1903, a copy being transmitted to Lord Lansdowne by Sir F. Plunkett on the same day (Despatch No. 298).]

prominently but we did attach immense importance to obtaining practical measures of reform and I earnestly trusted that the French Gov[ernmen]t would do all they could to support us.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 18. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. Germany (Prussia) 1572.

(No. 243.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 21, 1903.

The German Amb[assado]r told me to-day that he had reason to know that the German Gov[ernmen]t regarded with approval the proposals embodied in my despatch to Sir F. Plunkett of the 29th of Sep[tembe]r. It was, however, impossible for them to place themselves in antagonism to the two Powers who were dealing with the Macedonian Question.

I pointed out that our proposal could not be said to be antagonistic to any which had yet been put forward by the two Powers and that we had indeed been assured by them that they had before receiving our proposals arrived at very similar conclusions themselves.

I hoped that in these circumstances we might look for the general support and goodwill of the German Gov[ernmen]t.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 19. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. Italy 871.

(No. 219 A.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 21, 1903.

The Italian Amb[assado]r asked me to-day whether we had any news of the amended Scheme of Reforms for Macedonia which had been promised by the two Powers. I said that the Scheme had not yet been communicated to us and that I was somewhat surprised at the delay which had taken place in making it known to the Powers.

Monsieur Pansa told me that the Italian Gov[ernmen]t were in agreement with us in regard to the points dealt with in my Tel[egram] of the 29th Sept[embe]r to Sir F. Plunkett, and hoped that our proposals would secure the unanimous support of the Powers which they considered essential in order to maintain a common line of action towards the Porte.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].]**

It was not till October 24th that the detailed scheme known as the Mürzsteg programme and dated October 2nd was communicated to His Majesty's Government. It was presented to the Porte on October 23rd. The document is as follows: (1)

No. 20. Ann.

F.O. Austria 1847.

Décisions arrêtées pour être transmises sous forme d'instructions identiques aux Ambassadeurs d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie à Constantinople.

Mürzsteg, le 2 Octobre 1903.

I. Pour établir un contrôle de l'activité des autorités locales ottomanes quant à l'application des réformes, nommer auprès de Hilmi Pacha des agents civils spéciaux d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie obligés d'accompagner partout l'inspecteur général, d'attirer son attention sur les besoins de la population chrétienne, de lui signaler les abus des autorités locales, de transmettre les recommandations y relatives des Ambassadeurs à Constantinople et d'informer leurs Gouvernements de tout ce qui se passe dans le pays. Comme aide aux dits agents pourraient être nommés des secrétaires et des drogmans chargés de l'exécution de leurs ordres et autorisés à cet effet à des tournées dans les districts pour questionner les habitants des villages chrétiens, surveiller les autorités locales etc.

La tâche des agents civils étant de veiller à l'introduction des réformes et à l'apaisement des populations, leur mandat expirera dans le délai de deux ans à partir de leur nomination.

(1) [The French text is here substituted for the English version; both are published in *A. & P.* (1904), CX, pp. 842-4. For some other documents on this period v. *G.P.* XVIII, I, p. 375 seq.]

La Sublime Porte devra prescrire aux autorités locales d'accorder à ces agents toutes les facilités pour qu'ils soient à même de remplir leur mission.

II. Vu que la réorganisation de la gendarmerie et de la police turque constitue une des mesures les plus essentielles pour la pacification du pays, il serait urgent d'exiger de la Porte l'introduction de cette réforme.

Prenant cependant en considération que les quelques officiers suédois et autres, employés jusqu'à présent et qui, ne connaissant ni la langue, ni les conditions locales, n'ont pu se rendre utiles, il serait désirable d'introduire dans le projet primitif les modifications et compléments suivants :

- (a.) La tâche de réorganiser la gendarmerie dans les trois vilayets sera confiée à un général de nationalité étrangère, au service du Gouvernement Impérial ottoman, auquel pourraient être adjoints des militaires des Grandes Puissances qui se partageraient entre eux les circonscriptions où ils déploieraient leur activité de contrôleurs, d'instructeurs et d'organisateurs. De cette manière ils seraient à même de surveiller aussi les procédés des troupes envers la population.
- (b.) Ces officiers pourront demander, si cela leur paraissait nécessaire, l'adjonction d'un certain nombre d'officiers et de sous-officiers de nationalité étrangère.

III. Aussitôt qu'un apaisement du pays sera constaté, demander au Gouvernement ottoman une modification dans la délimitation territoriale des unités administratives en vue d'un groupement plus régulier des différentes nationalités.

IV. Simultanément demander la réorganisation des institutions administratives et judiciaires dans lesquelles il serait désirable d'ouvrir l'accès aux chrétiens indigènes et de favoriser le développement des autonomies locales.

V. Instituer immédiatement dans les principaux centres des vilayets des commissions mixtes formées d'un nombre égal de délégués chrétiens et musulmans pour l'examen des crimes politiques et autres commis durant les troubles. A ces commissions devraient prendre part les représentants consulaires d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie.

VI. Exiger du Gouvernement turc l'allocation de sommes spéciales :

- (a.) Pour la réintégration dans les localités de leur origine des familles chrétiennes qui se sont réfugiées en Bulgarie ou ailleurs;
- (b.) pour le secours aux chrétiens qui ont perdu leur avoir et leur domicile;
- (c.) pour la restauration des maisons, des églises et des écoles détruites par les Turcs durant l'insurrection.

Des commissions dans lesquelles siégeront des notables chrétiens décideront de la répartition de ces sommes. Les Consuls d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Russie en surveilleront l'emploi.

VII. Dans les villages chrétiens brûlés par les troupes turques et les bachibouzouks les habitants chrétiens réintégrés seront libérés durant un an du paiement de tout impôt.

VIII. Le Gouvernement ottoman s'engagera à nouveau à introduire sans le moindre retard les réformes mentionnées dans le projet élaboré au mois de février de l'année courante ainsi que celles dont la nécessité serait ultérieurement indiquée.

IX. La plupart des excès et des cruautés ayant été commis par les Ilavés (rédifs de II^e classe) et des bachibouzouks, il est urgent que les premiers soient licenciés et que la formation de bandes de bachibouzouks soit absolument empêchée.

All the Powers supported these proposals. In the two months following little or no progress was made and the situation on December 24th is thus described in a despatch to Sir N. O'Connor.

No. 21. Ann.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Connor.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Turkey 5263.

(No. 337.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 24, 1903.

I have received Your Excellency's Despatch No. 829 of the 15th instant, reporting the present state of the discussions as to the execution of the proposed reforms in Macedonia.

I need not say that His Majesty's Government have learned with great regret and disappointment that so little effective progress has hitherto been made in a matter in which prompt and speedy action is of such importance to all concerned.

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1904), CX, pp. 908-9. This, the last of these papers on events till December 1903, was laid before Parliament in February 1904. No information on events in 1904 was laid till October of that year. For two despatches from Sir N. O'Connor in November *v. Gooch & Temperley*, I, pp. 303-5.]

The decision of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments to demand these additional measures of reform was communicated to His Majesty's Government on the 5th of October last. The actual scheme was communicated to the Porte on the 23rd of that month and to the other Powers on the following day. Since then two months have elapsed and although a somewhat qualified acceptance of the scheme has been obtained from the Porte, it cannot be said that even the initial steps towards putting it into practical effect have been accomplished.

The two civil functionaries who are to assist the Inspector-General have indeed at last been selected by the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments, but it appears that their appointment is still deferred while the two Ambassadors are discussing with the Porte the exact title which these officials shall bear.

In regard to the reorganisation of the gendarmerie, which His Majesty's Government have throughout felt to be one of the most effective measures for the improvement of the situation, nothing whatever has yet been done—and although the two Powers have agreed that the Italian Government shall be requested to select a General for the supreme command, and the Italian Government have announced their readiness to do so as soon as the request is made, the Turkish Government seem still to be making difficulties as to taking even a first step in the matter.

On the 13th of November last I stated to you that His Majesty's Government were anxious to send out at the earliest possible moment the British officers who under paragraph 2 of the Mürzsteg programme would take part in the work of reorganisation.

On the 25th of the same month I suggested for the consideration of the Powers that the Ambassadors should form a Committee for the purpose of drawing up a scheme of procedure.

On the 4th instant the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments communicated their views as to the method of procedure which would be most convenient. They recommended that in the first instance they should insist on the appointment by the Porte of a foreign General, and that as soon as this appointment had been made each of the Powers should appoint a staff officer to assist him. They deprecated however the appointment of these officers or their dispatch to Constantinople until the General in command had been appointed.

Since that date His Majesty's Government have been constantly enquiring as to the progress made in the matter of this important appointment, upon which so much depends, but without eliciting any satisfactory reply.

His Majesty's Government cannot but regard this dilatory procedure with great apprehension as to the ultimate result. The few months of winter during which the climate prevents any serious outbreak of insurrection are rapidly passing. The insurgent Committees have made no secret of their determination to recommence operations in the spring as soon as the weather permits a resumption of them. It will be impossible to avert serious and far-reaching calamities unless the interval still left is used with energy for such an improvement of the administration as may relieve the bulk of the population from the worst at all events of the evils under which they now suffer, and disincline them from joining in or sympathising with the operations of the insurgent bands. If the appointments to which I have referred in this despatch are not made at once and effective action commenced on the spot there is little or no hope that any serious progress can be made in this direction.

I request that you will once more urge these considerations very earnestly on the attention of the Turkish Ministers, and impress upon them the unfortunate results which must ensue from further delay.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

II. INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, FEBRUARY–MAY, 1904.

** [[ED. NOTE.—It has been found impossible to describe the Gendarmerie Reforms in detail, v. A. & P. (1905), CIII, (Cd. 2249), pp. 555–792, *passim*, and G.P. XXII, chap. 161. The following documents throw some light on international relations between February and May 1904.

No. 22. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson.

F.O. France 3662.
(No. 79.) Confidential.
Sir,

Foreign Office, February 17, 1904.

I told the French Ambassador to-day that the position of affairs in the Balkan Peninsula rendered us extremely anxious in regard to future events in that part of Europe. It was evidently possible that, even if the scheme of reforms put forward by the two Powers were to succeed, hostilities might be brought about by the action

[16789]

F 2

either of Turkey or Bulgaria. If the scheme were to break down altogether, hostilities would be inevitable. Should a crisis arise or become imminent, I did not think public opinion in this country would allow us to leave matters, as we had hitherto done, to the two Powers, and I therefore considered it most desirable that the French and British Governments should endeavour to come to an understanding as to the action which they might adopt in the case which I had supposed. I added that from all I heard it seemed to me highly probable that the Italian Government would be willing to co-operate with us.

His Excellency said that he entirely agreed with my estimate of the situation. It seemed to him quite inevitable that if there were a serious recrudescence of trouble in the Balkan Peninsula the other Powers would have no choice but to intervene. He would gladly communicate the substance of my observations to M. Delcassé with a view to the establishment of an understanding of the kind which I had suggested.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 23. Ed. Add.

Sir F. Bertie to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Rome, February 19, 1904.

F.O. Italy 891.

D. 8.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 9.) Secret. Confidential.

R. 10.15 P.M.

French Ambassador has informed Minister for Foreign Affairs that M. Delcassé concurs in desire of Italian Government for maintenance of *status quo* in the East, and in their view that, if it cannot be preserved, a settlement should be decided by a European Congress, and not by any isolated action in Macedonia by Russia and Austria-Hungary, or by either of them.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has consequently suggested to the French Ambassador that the French Government should use their influence with the Russian Government to make them realise necessity of observing such a policy, and that Italian Government should, at the same time, ask the German Government to use their influence with the Austro-Hungarian Government to the same effect.

Minister for Foreign Affairs considers that if England would support such representations at St. Petersburg and Vienna there would be a good chance of preventing Russia and Austria-Hungary from committing themselves to some action from which it would be difficult for them to recede, but which might lead to a European war.

Signor Tittoni is uneasy at statement of the Hungarian Prime Minister to the Delegation. He would be glad to have, as soon as possible, an answer from your Lordship to inquiry reported in my despatch No. 17, Secret, 10th February, and to learn views of His Majesty's Government on his present suggestion.

No. 24. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson.

F.O. France 3662.

(No. 33.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 20, 1904.

During my conversation with the French Ambassador to-day, I recurred to the question of the situation in the Balkan Peninsula. I said that it seemed to me to afford much ground for anxiety, and that we ought in my opinion to be prepared to find ourselves confronted with events which might render our abstention impossible. Should the Murzsteg scheme break down, and a serious renewal of hostilities become imminent, this country would be expected to intervene, and, as His Excellency was aware, we were most anxious to do so with the concurrence and co-operation of France. We ought however to make up our minds as to the policy which we might support. There seemed to me to be only two possible solutions of the Macedonian difficulty. Macedonia might be either joined to Bulgaria, or given an autonomous régime under a Governor virtually independent of the Sultan. My impression was that the former of these schemes would not obtain the support of the Signatory Powers. His Excellency replied that he entirely agreed with me. Russia would, in present circumstances, certainly not consent to the creation of a Big Bulgaria. The idea would be equally distasteful to Austria. On the other hand he believed that Russia would not be sorry to be relieved, by the creation of an autonomous Macedonia, of a part of her responsibility for that part of the Turkish Empire. His Excellency saw no reason why there should not be a conference on the basis of the recognition of the autonomy of Macedonia, and he would be glad to ascertain M. Delcassé's views upon the subject. His own idea was that autonomy should be regarded as implying, not only a Governor

independent of the Sultan, but a system of financial control under which Macedonia would have her own budget and the provincial governors be given a position financially independent of the Constantinople authorities. He did not think a large number of international troops need be employed.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 25. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. Italy 891.

Tel. (No. 26.) Secret.

Foreign Office, February 23, 1904.

Your telegram No. 9 of Feb[ruary] 19.

We do not differ from policy suggested by Min[ister] for F[oreign] Aff[airs] and shall be ready to support it.

I have in fact already indicated to French and Italian Gov[ernmen]ts that, should situation in the Balkans undergo a change for the worse, the joint intervention of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin would in our opinion become inevitable.

We should be ready in such an event to take part in a conference or congress, but it would be necessary before agreeing to this course that we should come to an understanding with some, at all events of the Powers concerned as to the policy which we might advocate.

If it becomes clear that the scheme of the two Powers is destined to failure, we shall be ready to propose that Macedonia shall become an autonomous Province of the Turkish Empire under a Governor appointed by the Sultan for a term of years on the recommendation of the Signatory Powers, and that its finances shall be placed under some form of International control.

My informal discussions with French Ambassador lead me to suppose that such a solution would be acceptable to French Gov[ernmen]t.

We shall be glad to co-operate with Italian Gov[ernmen]t, and we attach great importance to timely action which may have the effect of averting war.

No. 26. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Plunkett.

F.O. Austria 1350.

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1904.

Count Mensdorff told me to-day that the feeling of the Austro-Hungarian Government with regard to the outlook in the Near East continued to be hopeful. They did not think the Bulgarians were likely to make a move in the near future, and they were therefore not much inclined to consider what ulterior measures might be taken in the event of such an occurrence. Meanwhile they continued to hope for the success of the scheme of reforms put forward by the two Powers.

I said that we had loyally supported the two Governments, and used every effort to promote the success of their scheme. It seemed to me however that it would be dangerous to assume that it was certain to succeed. To my mind the most important feature which it contained was the proposal for the reorganization of the Macedonian Gendarmerie. If satisfactory progress could be made with this, I thought there was some chance of maintaining peace, but I owned that I felt something like despair at the slow progress which was being achieved. There had been discussions lately with regard to the manner in which the vilayets should be apportioned to the officers of the different Powers, and also as to the attributes of those officers. We had no desire to be obstructive as to any of these questions, and it seemed to me that they might well be disposed of on the spot by our Representatives without further delay. I had however heard during the last few hours from Sir Nicholas O'Connor that affairs were at a standstill because the Austrian and Russian officers were waiting for further instructions from their Governments. Until these questions were disposed of, it was useless for us to send out our officers. I earnestly hoped Count Mensdorff would make the Austro-Hungarian Government aware of the strength of our feelings upon this subject. There was a growing feeling of impatience in this country in regard to it, and unless we were soon in a position to announce that the reorganization was proceeding we should be confronted with an irresistible demand for stronger measures.

I repeated what I had said to Count Mensdorff on a previous occasion to the effect that it was in my opinion the duty of all the Signatory Powers to consider beforehand what steps they would take in the event of the failure of the Murzsteg scheme. Although in my opinion such a failure would necessitate the intervention of the other

Powers, I saw no reason why we should not all work together, and I was able to say with confidence that nothing would be more satisfactory to His Majesty's Government than to feel that they were able to co-operate with that of Austria-Hungary in providing an effectual solution.

I asked Count Mensdorff whether there was any truth in the rumour that military preparations on a large scale were proceeding in Austria. He said that he had heard reports to that effect, but that he could not say whether there was any foundation for them or not.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 27. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Monson.

F.O. France 3662.

(No. 91.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 25, 1904.

The French Ambassador told me to-day that M. Delcassé had been in communication with the Russian Government in regard to their attitude with reference to affairs in the Balkan Peninsula. M. Delcassé had ascertained that the Russian Government did not believe that there was any reason for anxiety upon this point, or for believing that the scheme of the two Powers should be superseded. The French Government considered itself committed to support the scheme, and would do so loyally so long as there was any hope that it would succeed. If its failure became inevitable, the Powers would, no doubt, have to consider alternative proposals, but, in the opinion of the French Government, it was premature to take any action upon this assumption. The basis of the understanding between France and the two Powers was that they should endeavour to maintain the territorial *status quo* in the Balkan Peninsula, and there was no reason for attributing to any of the Powers covetous designs on that part of Europe.

I said that we certainly had no such designs, and that we also considered ourselves bound to give the scheme of the two Powers every chance of success. We ought, however, I thought, to be prepared for the emergency with which we might be confronted if the scheme showed signs of breaking down.

His Excellency did not disagree with me. He told me that, in his private opinion, the Powers had been guilty of a serious blunder in abdicating their functions, and committing themselves to the two Powers. He thought this course of action had been dictated as much by indolence as by any other motive.

I said that although, in my opinion, premature action was certainly to be deprecated, I thought it most desirable that we should take timely counsel as to the measures which we might adopt in the event of a catastrophe becoming imminent.

As to this, his Excellency said that M. Delcassé's inquiries, as well as a recent consultation with M. Nélidoff, who had been in Paris, had led him to the conclusion that the risk of such a catastrophe was less than might be supposed. It could only arise in consequence of the conduct of the Sultan or of that of the Bulgarian Government. The French Government had, however, reason to know that the Sultan did not want to have a collision ("ne veut pas de conflit"). His Majesty was aware that if there was one, the Powers would intervene, and he especially dreaded the intervention of Great Britain. As for the Bulgarians, they had at one time intended, in spite of strong Russian advice to the contrary, to invade Turkey, believing that Russia would find it impossible to leave them in the lurch. The outbreak of war in the Far East had, however, altered the situation, and the Bulgarians felt that Russia might be unable to assist them, even if she desired to do so. The ideas of the Bulgarian Government had accordingly become more pacific, and his Excellency had reason to believe, although not owing to official information, that they had lately approached the Sultan with the object of agreeing with him to the establishment of a *modus vivendi* in Macedonia. In these circumstances, the French Government did not anticipate a rising in the spring, and they therefore hoped that the scheme of the two Powers would be given a fair chance of succeeding. If it failed, they would be willing to act with us upon the lines which I had indicated.

I said that I hoped his Excellency would understand that I had not suggested any action inimical either to Austria or Russia. Both Powers had placed on record an admission that the scheme might prove insufficient and require to be expanded. If the other Signatory Powers intervened, I thought we should endeavour to do so as supporters of a policy in which we might all agree to take part.

I am, &c.
LANSDOWNE.

No. 28. Ed. Add.

Sir F. Plunkett to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Austria 1351.

(No. 45.) Secret.

My Lord,

Vienna, D. February 25, 1904.

R. February 29, 1904.

With reference to Your Lordship's Telegrams Nos. 23 and 24, marked Secret, of yesterday's date,⁽¹⁾ I venture respectfully to point out that the Austro-Hungarian, and I believe also the Russian Government, honestly desire the maintenance of the present *status quo* in the Balkans, and do not at all yet foresee that this cannot be preserved.

Moreover I beg to remind Your Lordship of what I have already more than once reported, viz., that these two Powers will resist the idea of Macedonia being made an autonomous province. I cannot say how far they will seriously object to the finances of Macedonia being placed under some form of International control, but any action altering the *status quo*, in the sense of giving an autonomous existence to Macedonia will, I fear, meet with strenuous opposition from the Austro-Hungarian Government.

I cannot conceal from Your Lordship my fear that the Austro-Hungarian Government, which is at present, full of suspicion of Italy might imagine that the advocacy of this scheme implies a concerted action contrary to the interests of this Empire, and might therefore be still further thrown into the arms of Russia.

I have, &c.

F. R. PLUNKETT.

⁽¹⁾ [These telegrams transmitted without comment, telegram No. 9 from Sir F. Bertie to Lord Lansdowne, *supra* p. 68, No. 23, and Lord Lansdowne's telegram No. 26 in reply, *supra* p. 69, No. 25.]

No. 29. Ed. Add.

Sir F. Bertie to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Rome, February 26, 1904.

D. 12.23 p.m.

R. 3 p.m.

F.O. Italy 891.

Tel. (No. 14.) Secret.

My telegram No. 13 Secret of 24th.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has received through German Government and Italian Ambassador at Vienna, who broached the subject of Macedonia on taking up his post, satisfactory assurances from the Austro-Hungarian Government, who state that they have no intention of acting on their own account and that they know Albania would be key to the Adriatic if possessed by either Austria or Italy and cannot be taken by either without war between the two states which neither desires.

No. 30. Ed. Add.

Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. France 3664.

(No. 123.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Paris, D. February 26, 1904.

R. February 27, 1904.

Having received the day before yesterday Your Lordship's despatches Nos. 79 and 83 Confidential of the 17th⁽¹⁾ and 20th⁽²⁾ instant respectively, recording your conversations with M. Cambon upon the situation in the Balkan Peninsula, I thought that I might as well inquire of M. Delcassé what he thought of that situation, and whether he agreed with Your Lordship in the views which you had expressed to M. Cambon and which His Excellency would of course have communicated to you.

M. Delcassé said that M. Cambon had left Paris that very morning and had an appointment with Your Lordship for the following day (yesterday); but His Excellency went on to say that since the interview which had taken place between you and the French Ambassador on the 20th, the news from South-Eastern Europe had taken a decided turn for the better and that he did not see any reason for extreme anxiety as yet.

I replied that the reason seemed to be always the same, namely the excessive length to which the preparations for carrying out the Müritzsteg programme were being dragged along; and that what I had understood Your Lordship had impressed upon M. Cambon was that there was a growing impatience in England at the want of progress in dealing with a programme which, in itself, contained but a minimum of satisfaction.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 67-8, No. 22.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 68-9, No. 24.]

I asked His Excellency if he had instructed his Representative at Constantinople to make any claim to a special sphere for the operations of the French military member of the general gendarmerie commission; to which His Excellency replied that without making any claim he had expressed the opinion that if, as he thought, there were any district in which French interests were particularly involved it would be better to select that district for France.

His Excellency did not pursue the subject; but I confess that I was struck by his pronounced optimism in regard to the general situation, and especially by his confidence that Turkey would never initiate any hostile action.

I have, &c.

EDMUND MONSON.

No. 31. Ed. Add.

Sir F. Lascelles to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Germany (Prussia) 1593.

(No. 58.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Berlin, D. February 26, 1904.

R. February 29, 1904.

Count Bülow dined with me last night to meet the Emperor who honoured His Majesty's Embassy with his presence, and after dinner we had some conversation on the general state of affairs. He feared that the Russo-Japanese War would last for a long time, and it seemed that the Russians did not anticipate that serious fighting would begin before the summer, as it would take some time for them to complete their military preparations. On my observing that it was scarcely likely that the Japanese would wait until the Russians were fully prepared, Count Bülow said that the Russians were completely taken by surprise by the Japanese attack. They seriously believed that Japan would never venture to attack so powerful a State as Russia and thought that they might treat her as they had treated the other minor Asiatic States through which they had passed without encountering any formidable resistance.

I said that this might perhaps account for the violence of the Anti-English feeling which apparently existed in Russia. If the Russians really believed that Japan would never venture to attack them, it was only natural that they should seek to account for her having done so by attributing her action to the instigation of her ally.

The conversation then turned to the Macedonian question, which Count Bülow hoped would not lead to any serious complications. He did not think that there was much danger of a war between Turkey and Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Government had given satisfactory assurances of their desire to maintain peace, and to restrain the action of the Macedonian Committees, and the Sultan would certainly not commence hostilities. In the case of the war with Greece it was with the greatest reluctance, and only after the Greeks had crossed the frontier that he could be induced to declare war. The reports from Constantinople showed that the Sultan was much averse to the idea of a war with Bulgaria.

I said that I hoped he was right, but it seemed that the Turks were concentrating Troops on the Bulgarian frontier, and that the Bulgarians were making extensive military preparations. I had seen also that the Italian Government took a very serious view of the state of affairs in Macedonia, and it seemed that some difficulty had arisen as to the districts in which foreign officers who had been sent out to assist in the organization of the Gendarmerie, should be employed.

Count Bülow replied that he thought that the Italian apprehensions were exaggerated, and the last accounts he had received were of a more hopeful character, and indicated an intention even on the part of the Macedonian Committees to give the Mürzsteg programme a fair chance.

I said that I presumed that if the scheme elaborated by Austro-Hungary and Russia should turn out to be a failure, it would be necessary for the Great Powers to consider what further action should be taken. Count Bülow shrugged his shoulders and said that he would strongly deprecate the idea of an European Congress being summoned to discuss the question. A Congress was excellent at the end of a war when both belligerents were more or less exhausted and desired peace, but it was a most dangerous thing at any other time, and would only accentuate more strongly any difference of opinion which might exist and thus cause greater complications, unless indeed the Great Powers should have decided beforehand exactly what was to be done, and should have appealed to the Congress, to give the sanction of Europe to the decisions they had already taken.

I have, &c.

FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 32. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Scott.

F.O. Russia 1677.

(No. 96.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 4, 1904.

The Russian Amb[assado]r called upon me to-day on his return from St. Petersburg. He told me that the Emperor of Russia had expressed himself as "delighted" at the selection of Mr. Charles Hardinge as your successor, although H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty] greatly regretted your retirement from a position which you had filled in a manner so acceptable to the Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited.

Count Benckendorff told me that while he found public opinion in St. Petersburg much excited against this country, both the Emperor and C[oun]t Lamsdorff readily admitted that in the controversy between Russia and Japan our attitude had all along been absolutely correct. C[oun]t L[amsdorff] found it however impossible to restrain the Russian press, and even if a newspaper was supplied with a communiqué contradicting some of the unfounded statements which had lately been in circulation, the same newspaper would publish on another page of the same issue further incendiary statements. He was afraid that it was of no use for the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to embark on a crusade ("polémique") against its own Press.

We then had some conversation with regard to the position of affairs in the Balkan Peninsula.

H[is] E[xc]ellency was instructed to tell me that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t remained firm in their determination to support the Mürzsteg scheme, and that their efforts would be in no wise slackened ("ralentis") on account of events in the Far East.

They considered that some satisfactory results had been already obtained and that with a little energy it should be possible to bring about a decided improvement in the condition of affairs. C[oun]t Lamsdorff earnestly hoped that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would continue their co-operation for this purpose.

I replied that no one would be better pleased than we if the Mürzsteg scheme succeeded. I said however that it seemed to us necessary to consider what steps the Powers might be called upon to take in the event of serious trouble arising in the Balkan Peninsula owing to the failure of the Powers to put the scheme into execution or from other causes.

I repeated to H[is] E[xc]ellency the substance of my recent conversations with C[oun]t Mensdorff upon this subject, and I begged him to understand that such discussions did not, so far as we were concerned, imply any intention of withdrawing the loyal support which we had hitherto given to the two Powers, or any desire to see their efforts fail. We believed on the contrary that should events render the intervention of the other Powers inevitable we should all of us be found desirous of discovering a solution which, without a disturbance of the territorial *status quo*, would save the Balkan Peninsula from the disaster of a further conflict. It was with this object and not with any idea of intriguing against the two Powers that we had approached the consideration of alternative measures.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 33. Ed. Add.

*Sir F. Bertie to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Rome, March 5, 1904.*

F.O. Italy 891.

Tel. (No. 17.) Secret.

D. 12-10 A.M.

R. 12-30 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs gave me the following information this evening.

The French Ambassador told him the French Government would not view with friendly eye (ne regarderait pas d'un œil amical) an Austrian occupation of Sandjak of Novi Bazar and he asked what views the Italian Government would take of it and suggested that they should sound Russian and British Governments as to their views.

Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that Italian Government would be very glad if Austrian Government could be dissuaded from such occupation, but that Italy and France had been parties to the treaty of Berlin, which authorised it. He would have no objection to asking British Government their opinion but French Government might themselves consult Russian Government.

French Ambassador argued that Berlin Treaty was 25 years old and that circumstances, in which it had authorised occupation, had changed and that it would now be inopportune.

M. Tittoni has instructed Italian Ambassador to confer with your Lordship on communication made by the French Ambassador. He is suspicious as to the object of French Government and asked me what I thought, and what I thought Your Lordship's view would [be].

I said that as H[is] M[ajesty's] Government were acting under Berlin Treaty, I did not suppose that Your Lordship would be disposed to make objection to Austria acting on one of its Articles and that [it] seemed to me that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t did not feel able to start the objection to the occupation by their ally and had therefore instig[ated] the French Government to get Italy to move in the matter. M. Ba[rrière] does all he can to create friction between Italy and Austria to alienate Italy from her partner in the Triple.

No. 34. Ed. Add.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5332.

(No. 363.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Constantinople, D. May 11, 1904.

R. May 23, 1904.

At a private audience of the Sultan last Friday, His Imperial Majesty alluded to the successes of the Japanese army in a way that left little doubt, that for the moment he was under the influence of the bellicose element in official circles whose hostility to Russia is proverbial and who do not conceal their jubilation at the success of the Japanese.

I happened to congratulate His Majesty on the termination of the Greek Consular incident at Smyrna, for which he had taken credit as due entirely to his own initiative, when he went on to speak of the part Greece had played as the tool of Russia. All the small neighbouring States, such as Greece, Roumania, Bulgaria and Servia, had, His Majesty said, acted as the vanguard of Russia, and in all their difficulties with that Empire, they had been forced at the same time to contend with these neighbouring countries. Turkey had, at least within recent years, never fought single handed with Russia, and in 1877 it was not Russia but Bulgaria and Roumania that turned the scale of victory against her.

Now that Russia was face to face with a determined foe, she found herself obliged, to no small extent, to rely on the bravery of her Mussulman soldiers, many of whose kith and kin she had forced into exile by refusing to them the civil rights which were enjoyed by all other Russian subjects.

Thousands and tens of thousands had emigrated from Russia in the last half century.

It was not to be expected that Moslems would freely give their lives for a country that had consistently subjected them to such ill-treatment and it was not surprising that Mussulmans should rejoice at her defeat and that the sympathy which they had shown to England during the South African War should be refused to Russia. As a military Power Russia never had exhibited any great qualities, and before the outbreak of the war he had held the opinion very firmly that the Japanese would at all events be successful at sea. In fact he had told the Russian Ambassador so and had advised him that his Government should avoid a Naval Engagement and confine their operations as far as possible to military operations on land.

Unfortunately though weaker than the Japanese, the Russian fleet was stronger than the Turkish and without outside assistance Turkey could not hold her own at sea whatever she might do on land.

The Sultan is generally very cautious in his references to foreign Powers but on Friday last he seemed to be speaking under some special impulse, which, though probably very temporary was typical of the feelings of the great mass of his subjects.

His Majesty is, however, too well aware of the condition of his army especially upon the Eastern Frontier to be led very far by such enthusiasm and I thought it unnecessary to make any comment.

I spoke, however, to the Grand Vizier a few days later on the subject, and he agreed with me that no importance was to be attached to His Majesty's utterances in this respect.

After the Audience, I presented Mr. Townley who has lately arrived as Secretary of His Majesty's Embassy.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONNOR.

No. 35. Ed. Add.

Sir F. Plunkett to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Vienna, May 15, 1904.

D. 2 P.M.

R. 5.15 P.M.

F.O. Austria 1353.

Tel. (No. 35.) Confidential.

Macedonian reforms.

The day before yesterday, at Buda-Pesth, Count Goluchowski on two different occasions expressed to me his disappointment at the pessimistic language your Lordship had held in the House of Lords on the 5th instant. He said it was most unfortunate your Lordship should have expressed yourself so strongly; he would have to say almost exactly the contrary when interpellated in the Delegations, and he regretted extremely that this must give the idea that the British and Austrian Governments were not in agreement. Any public symptom of such difference of opinion between the two Governments would have the disastrous effect of encouraging the Sultan. His Excellency said he had been pleased with reply made by Mr. Balfour a couple of days previously, but your Lordship's reply had caused him astonishment and pain.

I said that I could not admit that he had any grounds for annoyance. Your Lordship had expressed regret that so little progress was being made. The fact was that seven months had elapsed since the Mürzsteg programme was announced, and nothing, so far, had been done except to prepare the way for the gendarmerie.

Count Goluchowski would not admit that this was a correct statement of the case. Various improvements had already been made, and seven months were not a long time when we consider the talent the Sultan possesses for evading his responsibilities.

I asked his Excellency to mention what were the serious improvements so far made. I was sure your Lordship would only be too glad to know them.

His Excellency then tried to shift the blame on His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople and on His Majesty's Agent and Consul-General at Sophia; the latter was new at the post, and was being hoodwinked by Prince.

I declined to share this view, and asked for proof of any real progress having yet been made with reforms.

His Excellency said that it was England only which insisted in seeing the future of the Balkans so black, and that our pessimistic utterances did much harm as they encouraged both Sultan and insurgents.

I said that I feared that things were not so certain to be quiet as he seemed to anticipate. First, I might tell him in confidence, that a large sum of money was now on its way via Paris, Rome and Athens to the insurgents; and, secondly, that I was not (group undecypherable) that just as the outbreak of war with Japan had reacted peacefully on the Balkans, want of success now of Russia in Manchuria might make Slav Committees renew their activity in South-Eastern Europe.

Count Goluchowski did not attach importance to the second of these dangers, but he evidently was put out by what I had said regarding money reaching the insurgents.

Our second conversation ended more pleasantly than the first had begun, and his Excellency desired me to impress upon your Lordship that he was sincerely anxious to act with England.

He volunteered the information that there was no truth in the report of Austrian Ambassador's retirement from Constantinople.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

I consider Count G[oluchowski]'s remarks quite uncalled for, and not even correct.

E. R.]]**

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE FINANCIAL REFORMS IN MACEDONIA (1905).⁽¹⁾

I. THE DEMANDS OF THE POWERS, JANUARY-MAY 1905.

No. 36.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Plunkett.

F.O. Austria 1361.

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 25, 1905.

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador told me to-day that Colonel Fairholme, whom he had just met at Windsor Castle, had expressed the opinion that there was not much chance of a general rising in Macedonia this spring. Count Mensdorff evidently attached much importance to Colonel Fairholme's opinion. I replied that Col[onel] Fairholme had said much the same to me, but that other persons not less qualified to judge were less sanguine in their anticipations. The particular section which had been placed in charge of the British gendarmerie officers was the quietest of all, and therefore scarcely a fair sample of the other districts.

I told His Excellency that we had just received an account of the new proposals which had been put forward by the two Powers for the introduction of financial reforms in Macedonia.⁽²⁾ I was glad to find that they realised the necessity of taking measures more effectual than any to which they had up to the present time resorted. I thought it right to tell His Excellency that we were deeply convinced of the necessity of going beyond the Mürzsteg Scheme, and that we had indeed been engaged in formulating proposals of our own with this object. His Excellency asked me whether I did not think that the new Austro-Russian proposals were a step in the right direction. I said that I certainly thought so, and welcomed them as such, but they seemed to me not to go nearly far enough towards securing a sufficient amount of financial independence for the Vilayets.

The new scheme had only been communicated to me within the last few hours, and I had not been able to study it as thoroughly as it deserved, but I could not find in it anything which would prevent the Turkish Government from diverting the revenues of the Macedonian Provinces to its own uses, leaving the local administration without sufficient funds to provide improvements and remunerate its officials. His Excellency said that he felt convinced that the Austrian Government would gladly consider any suggestions which we might desire to make, and he was glad to gather from what I had said that we had no desire to tear up the Mürzsteg programme, but rather to expand and improve it. I replied that this was the case, and that if the two Governments themselves were prepared to do what was necessary, we would gladly support them.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

⁽¹⁾ [For this subject *v. A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2759). Though numbered Turkey No. 3 (1905), this was not laid before Parliament until November 1905 and is bound in the 1906 volume. Also *G.P.* XXII, chap. 162.]

⁽²⁾ [Of 17th January, 1905, published in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2759), pp. 193-198. This suggested a somewhat less drastic method of controlling finance and justice than that proposed by Lord Lansdowne on 11th January.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. France 3703.

(No. 67.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 3, 1905.

The French Ambassador asked me to receive him to-day, and told me that he had now obtained from M. Delcassé an account of the result of the communications which had passed between him and Count Lamsdorff in regard to the question of Macedonian reforms. Count Lamsdorff had made a statement to the following effect.—He had conferred with the Austrian Government, and the views which he expressed were theirs as well as his. The two Governments considered that the present moment was most inopportune for “proposing an extension of the Mürzsteg programme.” In consultation with the Imperial Ottoman Bank they had themselves formulated an elaborate scheme of financial reform for the Macedonian vilayets, and it was upon the introduction of financial reforms that all other reforms depended. [In their view the production by any of the other Powers of a rival scheme could only have the effect of encouraging the Sultan to oppose their proposals and of leading him to think that the Powers were divided amongst themselves. They therefore strongly urged not only that Great Britain should not put forward at this moment an alternative scheme of her own, but that no mention should be made of the fact that these exchanges of views had taken place.] Russia and Austria-Hungary counted upon the support and confidence of the other Powers, and would appeal to them should unforeseen events, or the proved insufficiency of their own proposals, render new arrangements inevitable. [M. Cambon added that M. Delcassé, in transmitting these observations, had called attention to Count Lamsdorff’s promise to appeal, in case difficulties should present themselves, to the other Powers. Such an appeal would, it seemed to him, give us an opportunity of reconsidering the situation and offering suggestions of our own.]

I thanked His Excellency for this important communication, which I said it would be necessary for me to lay before my colleagues before giving him an official answer. My own feeling was that the new scheme of financial reforms contained several questionable features. It seemed to me, for example, to impose upon the Imperial Ottoman Bank functions which it was scarcely qualified to perform. Nor could I find in it any sufficient guarantees that the financial administration of the vilayets would under it be placed in the hands of competent officials. As I understood the scheme, it left a large measure of authority in the hands of Hilmi Pacha and of two Civil Agents, neither of whom could be regarded as financial experts. They were, I understood, to be aided by six Inspectors, but these again were to be Turkish and were to be approved by Hilmi. The scheme as a whole, although purporting to be a development of the Vienna and Mürzsteg programmes, appeared to me to involve a new departure which the other Powers could scarcely be expected to support until they had had an ample opportunity of examining the whole of the machinery which it was proposed to set up.

[His Excellency called my attention to the passage in which it was said that the scheme was to be carried out with the support of the “Puissances intéressées,”—a phrase which, he said, was ambiguous. I said that I felt no doubt from the context that the Powers referred to were Austria-Hungary and Russia.]

I promised His Excellency that I would communicate with him again as soon as I was in a position to inform him of the views of His Majesty’s Government.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2759), pp. 203–204. The passages here placed in square brackets were omitted or abbreviated in that version.]

Sir J. Kennedy to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Roumania 164.

(No. 5.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Bucharest, D. February 6, 1905.

R. February 13, 1905.

During a recent conversation with the King of Roumania, His Majesty, in referring to the state of affairs in Macedonia, stated his conviction that there would be no war this year in the Balkan Peninsula. In reply to His Majesty's enquiries, I observed that public opinion in England desired the establishment of an autonomous Macedonia as the only means of securing tranquillity and justice for the inhabitants.

His Majesty rejoined that autonomy, unless carefully guarded, would inevitably lead to the annexation by Bulgaria of the greater part of Macedonia, which would be a serious danger for Roumania: he explained that he was always in favour of creating a "principality of Macedonia," but should a Governor General be appointed over an autonomous Macedonia, he ought to be supported and controlled by a Commission of Delegates of the Great Powers.

My Austro-Hungarian and Russian Colleagues assure me that steady progress is being made towards the autonomy of Macedonia by the reform scheme, that the only policy towards that end is to obtain by degrees concessions from the Porte, that the next step will be a financial reform, to be followed by a reform of the administration of justice.

My two above-mentioned Colleagues also state that Austria and Russia count for the success of their representations at Constantinople on the co-operation of the Western Powers, adding that, although the German Government seeks to avoid outward signs of support to the Mürzsteg scheme, the German Ambassador steadily supports the representations of Austria and Russia at Constantinople.

The Marquess Pallavicini and Monsieur de Giers have each assured me that the constantly expressed fears of an Austrian occupation of Northern Macedonia were groundless; while Monsieur de Giers states that Russia would be the first Power to oppose the above-mentioned occupation: Monsieur de Pallavicini urges that the Austro-Hungarian Government have enough troubles on their hands at home to exclude any desire to undertake an adventurous policy in the Balkans.

I have, &c.

J. G. KENNEDY.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Plunkett.

F.O. Austria 1361.

(No. 17.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 15, 1905.

I had some conversation with the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to-day on the subject of Macedonia. His Excellency referred to the speech which I delivered in the House of Lords last night, to which he did not take exception, although its tone had evidently disappointed him. His Excellency expressed a strong hope that His Majesty's Government would not spring new proposals upon the two Powers. I said that we had no intention of doing anything of the kind, but we adhered to the reservations with which we had accepted their original scheme. We strongly desired however that there should be no appearance of disunion amongst the Powers, and if the two Powers would insist on adequate reforms, particularly of a financial character, we would gladly give them our support. I told His Excellency, in confirmation of what I had said, that as lately as yesterday I had telegraphed to the British Chargé d'Affaires at Constan-

tinople, authorising him to explain if he was questioned that although His Majesty's Government might have views of their own, they desired to await the reply of the Porte to the recent proposal of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments, with whom they were in friendly communication as to the new scheme.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 40.

Sir J. Kennedy to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Roumania 164.

(No. 13.) Confidential.

Bucharest, D. April 5, 1905.

My Lord,

R. April 10, 1905.

During the past month no special attention has been attracted in Roumania by the state of affairs in European Turkey.

About a week ago the King of Roumania again assured me that this year there would be no war in the Balkan Peninsula, and that the autonomy of Macedonia would be disastrous for Roumania, because it would inevitably result in the annexation by Bulgaria of Macedonian territory.

At a recent diplomatic reception, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, who expresses his opinions very freely, told me that according to his information public opinion in England was strongly in favour of Bulgarian aspirations, and that Bulgaria was encouraged to buy arms and prepare for war. He admitted the failure of the reform scheme, and said that the Gendarmerie was not trustworthy: that the Christian recruits of that corps favoured their own nationals, so that a Bulgarian gendarme would report the misdeeds of a Greek, but would conceal those of a Bulgarian, and that Greek gendarmes acted in the same way. He said that the financial reform scheme would never be accepted by the Sultan, and that the proposal of the Porte to increase the import duties from 8 to 11 % *ad valorem* would be frustrated by the German government, who insisted that part of the increased revenue should be devoted to the construction of the Bagdad Railway.

The Bulgarian diplomatic agent, who had read Your Lordship's speech in Parliament delivered on 28th ultimo, has spoken to me strongly in favour of what he called the English plan for the reform of European Turkey exclusive of Albania.

M. Dimitroff said that the above plan was founded on Lord Salisbury's proposal at the Constantinople Conference of 1876, and consisted of uniting the vilayets of Adrianople and Jannina to the three vilayets which form Macedonia, and of placing them all under a Christian Governor-General, who should be advised by delegates from each of the Powers signatories of the Treaty of Berlin.

The above scheme of reform if realised would, continued M. Dimitroff, assure a long term of peace to the inhabitants; it would thwart Bulgarian aspirations, and would give the Greeks numerically first place of the Christian populations—unless a large slice of the Adrianople vilayet conterminous to Constantinople was left under Turkish administration. It would also allow of the reduction of Turkish troops to 10,000 or 12,000 men, and would terminate the predominant position and influence of Russia and Austria-Hungary.

M. Dimitroff's ostensibly disinterested views are evidently dictated by patriotic desire. The realisation of the above scheme of reform would strengthen the influence of the Western Powers at the expense of Russia and Austria, and it would never give the Greek element a numerical superiority over the Bulgarian population. Moreover he knows that Bulgaria will never rest until she has secured a port on the Ægean Sea.

I have, &c.

J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 41.

Sir F. Plunkett to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Austria 1362.

(No. 88.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Vienna, D. April 7, 1905.

R. April 10, 1905.

During a conversation which I had a few days ago with my Italian Colleague, His Excellency expressed anxiety lest the Russian Government, in view of its present numerous difficulties at home and in Manchuria, should leave a free hand to Austria-Hungary to do as she might think best in the Balkans, and he enquired whether I was disposed to agree with him that there might be a possibility of such an occurrence.

I replied that I thought it extremely unlikely that Russia would adopt such a course and I had so far seen no symptom of her doing so. I added as an expression of quite my own personal opinion, that, however great the defeat of Russia in the Far East might be, and however seriously her internal troubles might react on her present form of Government, there was every probability that the Russian nation must continue to be a Great Power in Europe, and would never resign the hope of playing, at some more convenient moment, the leading part in the settlement of everything connected with the Balkans.

I have, &c.

F. R. PLUNKETT.

No. 42.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Egerton.

F.O. Italy 905.

(No. 56.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 12, 1905.

I had some conversation to-day with the Italian Ambassador upon the subject of Macedonia, and particularly as to the proposal which I understood was to be made to us that the Powers should be invited to appoint financial agents to co-operate with the civil agents now employed by the two Powers under the Mürzsteg programme. His Excellency agreed with the opinion which I ventured to express that, although the proposal was a step in the right direction, it did not go far enough. He thought however that it might be of use as a basis for further discussion, and he promised to make me aware as soon as possible of the manner in which it was regarded by the Italian Government.

His Excellency was good enough to say that the Italian Government would certainly be favourable to our proposal to extend the reforms to the Adrianople vilayet.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

II. THE NAVAL DEMONSTRATION OF THE POWERS. MAY-DECEMBER 1905.

[ED. NOTE.—On the 8th May a Note by the Six Powers was presented to the Porte respecting Financial Reforms in Macedonia, and demanding the appointment of four financial Delegates, nominated respectively by France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy, "to act in concert with the Inspector-General and the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Civil Agents, whose functions were defined in the Mürzsteg Programme."⁽¹⁾ No reply was returned and a joint request for an answer was therefore presented on the 24th June. The Porte returned an evasive reply on the 12th July. On the 31st July a Joint Note of the Six Powers was transmitted,

(¹) [For text v. A. & P. (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2759), pp. 352-3.]

insisting on compliance. The Porte did not reply, so on the 26th and 27th August the actual names of the four Financial Delegates were communicated to the Porte in Joint Notes. To these the Porte refused agreement in a Note dated the 29th August and delivered the 1st September. Strong representations from individual ambassadors at Constantinople having proved useless, they decided in conference to advise their Governments to prepare measures of coercion if necessary (October 5th). On the 6th they instructed the four financial Delegates, who had arrived at Salonica, to proceed to Uskub (Skoplye) to take up their duties, and informed the Porte of their decision in a collective Note presented on the 6th. On the 19th October the Russian and Austro-Hungarian ambassadors informed Sir Nicholas O'Connor that they had been instructed to confer with their colleagues and had received instructions that their Governments "are ready to have recourse to a Naval demonstration if Ottoman Government will not accept Financial Delegates without such measure being adopted"; and that they intended to ask for a collective audience with the Sultan, in order to reiterate their demands.

Lord Lansdowne replied on the 20th October stating that he had informed the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador that "in my opinion, the Ambassadors [at Constantinople] should be instructed to state distinctly that the Powers would not shrink from measures for enforcing their demands if the Porte maintained their refusal." (2)

A final Note was received from the Porte on the 21st of which the text follows.]

(2) [The above is a summary of the published papers in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (*Cd.* 2816), pp. 1-79.]

No. 43.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5398.

(No. 731.)

My Lord,

Therapia, D. October 21, 1905.

R. October 27, 1905.

With reference to my Despatch No. 715 of the 15th instant I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a fresh communication dated the 20th instant which the Sublime Porte has addressed to the Representatives of the six Great Powers.

The Note protests energetically against the presence of the Foreign Financial Delegates in Macedonia and against their interference in the administration of the country.

The Imperial Ottoman Government once more declares that it is impossible for it to accept the appointment of these Delegates and urges the Representatives of the Powers to put an end to the present situation.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONNOR.

Enclosure in No. 43.

Note Verbale of Sublime Porte to Representatives of Six Great Powers.

Par ses précédentes communications et notamment par sa réponse du 14 Octobre la Sublime Porte a eu l'honneur de faire connaître les raisons majeures pour lesquelles elle ne peut adhérer à la nomination de délégués financiers dans les trois Vilayets de Roumélie.

Elle apprend aujourd'hui avec regret que malgré ses objections justifiées les fonctionnaires désignés par les quatre Puissances comme délégués non seulement se sont rendus sur les lieux, mais qu'ils ont même commencé à tenir des réunions avec les deux Agents Civils adjoints à l'Inspecteur Général pour délibérer sur les affaires financières des dites provinces.

La tâche dévolue aux Agents Civils ayant été déterminée et fixée d'une façon précise, le Gouvernement Impérial ne saurait admettre qu'ils s'écartent ainsi des limites qui leur ont été assignées, pas plus qu'il ne peut consentir à ce que des agents étrangers qu'il n'a pas reconnus, viennent sur son territoire s'ingérer dans l'administration du pays.

Ce fait contraire aux accords intervenus constituant une grave atteinte aussi bien aux traités qu'à ses droits et à ses intérêts, le Gouvernement Impérial déclare encore une fois être dans l'impossibilité d'accepter une telle situation et ne peut qu'insister auprès de L[eurs] E[xcellences] MM. les représentants des Puissances afin qu'ils veuillent bien dans leur esprit de justice y mettre un terme.

Le 20 Octobre 1905.

No. 44.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 333.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 23, 1905.

The Russian Ambassador informed me to-day that the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Ambassadors at Constantinople had been instructed to invite their colleagues to join with them in demanding a simultaneous audience of the Sultan for the purpose of again pressing for the recognition of the Financial Commission, of which the Delegates had now met at Uskub. This step was intended to bear witness to the unanimity of the Powers, and their determination not to accept a refusal.

The two Governments were however of opinion that the Powers should be prepared for such a refusal, and should be ready with a plan for applying some form of coercion. They considered that the most efficacious step would be a naval demonstration upon the Turkish Littoral, and they suggested that the arrangements for such a demonstration should be considered in advance by the Ambassadors.

His Excellency was instructed to express the hope that His Majesty's Government would agree to these suggestions, and would give orders to the British Ambassador to act upon these lines with his colleagues.

I told His Excellency that Sir Nicholas O'Connor would be instructed to act with his colleagues in the manner suggested, and I felt little doubt that, should the Powers come to the conclusion that a naval demonstration was inevitable. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would be found ready to take part in it.

[I am, &c.]
L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 45.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Goschen.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Austria 1361.

(No. 95.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 23, 1905.

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador informed me to-day that in consequence of the refusal of the Porte to recognise the Financial Commission, of which the members had now assembled at Uskub, the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Ambassadors at Constantinople had been instructed to confer with their colleagues and to propose to them that they should join in demanding a collective audience of the Sultan in order by this means to demonstrate the complete agreement of the Cabinets concerned. His Excellency added that the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments had taken into consideration the possibility that this collective action of the Ambassadors might fail to have the desired effect. Should this be the case, they had determined that ulterior measures of a coercive kind would have to be taken on the spot, and with

⁽¹⁾ [This and the preceding document are published in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), pp. 80-1. These two despatches were sent in substance to Sir N. O'Connor. Telegram No. 190 of Lord Lansdowne, October 24, 1905.]

this object they had decided to propose to the other Powers represented on the Financial Commission that they should take part in a joint naval demonstration directed at certain parts of the Ottoman Empire. The details of such a demonstration would, if the idea was accepted in principle by the Powers, have to be arranged by the Ambassadors, who would, at the proper time, submit definite proposals.

I told His Excellency that Sir Nicholas O'Connor would be instructed to act with his colleagues in the manner suggested, and I felt little doubt that, should the Powers come to the conclusion that a naval demonstration was inevitable, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would be found ready to take part in it.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 46.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Connor.

F.O. Turkey 5401.

Foreign Office, October 24, 1905.

Tel. (No. 191.) Secret.

D. 6 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.

I have consulted Admiralty as to most convenient form of naval demonstration. They are of opinion that joint occupation of Mytelene and perhaps also of Lemnos offers fewest difficulties and objections.

Both islands could be occupied by a force of eight ships of which four should be large and four smaller vessels.

Above is for your own information only.

In any discussion with other Ambassadors you had better await Austrian and Russian proposals and report them to us by telegram.

No. 47.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. Germany (Prussia) 1615.

(No. 278.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 24, 1905.

During the course of my conversation with the German Ambassador this afternoon, I asked His Excellency whether he had any information with regard to the action which was likely to be taken by the German Government in consequence of the Sultan's refusal to recognise the Macedonian Commission. His Excellency told me that the Austrian and Russian Governments had made to the German Government a proposal similar to that which we had received. The German Government had replied to it by saying that they were prepared to authorise their representative at Constantinople to join with his colleagues in demanding a collective audience of the Sultan, but that they had, as yet, come to no conclusion with regard to the desirability of enforcing the demands of the Powers by means of a naval demonstration.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 48.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5398.

(No. 740.)

*Therapia, D. October 24, 1905.**R. October 30, 1905.*

My Lord,

With reference to my Telegram No. 153 of the 22nd instant I have the honour to enclose herewith to Your Lordship a copy of a Note which the Ambassadors of the six Great Powers propose addressing to-morrow to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in reply to the persistent refusal of the Imperial Ottoman Government to recognize the Financial Delegates.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

P.S.—After the Draft Note had been seen, approved, and initialled by the Ambassadors, the German Ambassador received instructions to insist on the insertion of the word “collective” after the word “audience.” As I saw no serious objection I agreed to this proposal.⁽¹⁾

N. R. O'C.

Enclosure in No. 48.

Draft Note of Ambassadors of Six Great Powers to Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Les Ambassadeurs d'Autriche-Hongrie, d'Allemagne, de Russie, de Grande-Bretagne, et d'Italie, et le Chargé d'Affaires de France ont l'honneur, d'ordre de leurs Gouvernements respectifs, de prier Son Excellence Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de bien vouloir leur obtenir une audience collective auprès de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan.

Cette audience aura pour objet de représenter personnellement à Sa Majesté l'absolue nécessité de l'acceptation par la Sublime Porte de la proposition des Six Puissances relative à l'établissement de la Commission financière pour les trois Vilayets, attendu que dans le cas contraire les Puissances se verraient obligées d'avoir recours aux mesures commandées par la situation.

Yenikeui, le Octobre, 1905.

⁽¹⁾ [v. G.P. XXII, pp. 290-1.]

No. 49.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. France 3704.

(No. 683.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 25, 1905.

I informed the French Ambassador to-day of my conversations with the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Ambassadors upon the subject of the steps to be taken by the Powers at Constantinople in consequence of the refusal of the Turkish Government to recognise the Macedonian Commission. His Excellency told me that the French Government had received a proposal similar to that which had been made to us, and that he had been instructed to question me as to the reply which we intended to make. The French Government would reply in the same sense.

I mentioned to His Excellency that Count Metternich had told me that the German Government had not, as yet, come to any conclusion as to the ulterior measures which might be taken in the event of the Sultan remaining obdurate, and

that I could not help anticipating that when the time came we might find that the German Government refused to participate in a naval demonstration.⁽¹⁾

His Excellency observed that if the German Government should thus dissociate itself from proceedings adopted at the instance of Russia and Austria, he should regard it as an important indication that the German Emperor had failed in his attempts to bring over the Russian Emperor.

[I am, &c.
LANSDOWNE.]

(¹) [But see *G.P.* XXII, pp. 289-92.]

No. 50.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Therapia, October 27, 1905.

F.O. Turkey 5401.

D. 2 A.M.

Tel. (No. 156.)

R. 7 A.M.

My telegram No. 152, 21st October, and my despatch No. 740, 24th October.⁽¹⁾

The Ambassadors received this morning, in reply to their collective note presented yesterday, a written communication from the Porte, as follows:—

“Minister for Foreign Affairs regrets all the more not to be able to comply with the desire of the Ambassadors, in as much as there exists no precedent for a collective audience being granted to the foreign Representatives on a question of internal policy, and inasmuch as subject mentioned by their Excellencies refers to a decision of the Government which has been taken after mature deliberation by the Sublime Porte, to whom it alone appertains to treat the question.

“This decision is based on sovereign rights and independence of Imperial Government, which the Powers have always declared their intention to preserve from all attack, and it is on these principles that the Porte bases its refusal to accept the establishment of a Commission which constitutes a direct interference in administration of country, and which, as they have already more than once stated, does not form part of programme which they have accepted, or of the Agreements come to.

“This programme and these Agreements have been faithfully executed by Imperial Government, and it was in order to comply with them that they put into force the financial Règlement which they had been careful to communicate to Ambassadors, and which insures the proper development of this important branch of Administration.

“In view of results of (? programme) and the considerations which they have adduced, the Porte remain convinced that Powers, inspired by their high sense of justice, will allow them loyally to carry out work begun, which any proposal other than is implied in existing understanding can only compromise in a manner unfavourable to solution desired by all parties.”

(¹) [*v. supra* p. 84, No. 48.]

No. 51.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5398.

(No. 749.)

Therapia, D. October 27, 1905.

My Lord,

R. October 31, 1905.

I had the honour to telegraph to Your Lordship last night translation of the Note which the Representatives of the Great Powers have received from the Sublime

Porte in reply to the collective Note which we presented on the previous day to the Ottoman Government.

[The tenour of the Note, of which I now enclose a copy is, as Your Lordship will perceive, of a very determined and negative character and the promptitude of the reply has taken us somewhat by surprise.

The hurried decision of the Government may possibly be due to the fact that the feast of Ramazan commences on Sunday and that the Sultan is not unwilling to gain the popularity which a refusal will acquire for His Majesty at a time when the fanatical spirit of his Moslem subjects seems very high.](¹)

The statement made by the Porte that they alone have the power to treat this question is a novel declaration of a constitutional principle for which it would be difficult to find a precedent.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

Enclosure in No. 51.

Note addressed to Representatives of Great Powers by Sublime Porte.(²)

Par leur communication e[n] d[ate] du 12 (25) Octobre, MM. les Ambassadeurs d'Autriche-Hongrie, d'Allemagne, de Russie, de Grande-Bretagne, d'Italie et le Chargé d'Affaires de France ont demandé au Ministre des Affaires Etrangères de leur obtenir une audience collective auprès de S[a] M[ajesté] I[mpériale] le Sultan.

Ils déclarent que cette audience aura pour objet de représenter personnellement à S[a] M[ajesté] l'absolue nécessité de l'acceptation par la S[ublime] Porte de la proposition des six puissances relative à l'établissement de la commission financière pour les trois vilayets.

Le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères regrette d'autant plus de ne pouvoir se rendre à ce désir qu'il n'existe point de précédent d'audience collective accordée aux représentants étrangers pour une question de politique intérieure et qu'en ce qui concerne particulièrement le cas spécifié par L[eurs] E[xcellences] il vise une décision gouvernementale prise après mûre délibération par la S[ublime] Porte, à qui seule il incombe de traiter.

Cette décision est basée sur les droits de souveraineté et l'indépendance du Gouvernement Impérial que les puissances elles-mêmes ont toujours déclaré vouloir préserver de toute atteinte; et c'est sur ces principes que la S[ublime] Porte se fonde pour ne pas adhérer à l'institution d'un organe qui constitue une ingérence directe dans l'administration du pays et qui, ainsi qu'elle l'a relevé plus d'une fois, n'est jamais entré dans le programme accepté ni dans les accords intervenus. Ce programme et ces accords, le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[érial] les exécute fidèlement, et c'est pour s'y conformer qu'il a mis en application le règlement financier dont il a eu soin de donner connaissance à MM. Les Ambassadeurs et qui assure une parfaite gestion de cette branche importante du service.

Devant les résultats acquis et eu égard aux considérations exposées par elle, la S[ublime] Porte demeure toujours convaincue que les Puissances, dans leurs sentiments de haute justice, voudront bien la laisser poursuivre loyalement l'œuvre entreprise que toute disposition hors de l'entente établie ne peut que compromettre au préjudice d'une solution désirée par tout le monde.

Le 26 Octobre 1905.

(1) [Paraphrased and passages in square brackets omitted in A. & P. (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), p. 84.]

(2) [Published in A. & P. (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), pp. 84-5.]

No. 52.

Memorandum communicated to Musurus Pasha, October 28, 1905.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Turkey 5419.

In reply to the proposal from the Sublime Porte, which was communicated by Musurus Pasha on the 15th Feb[ruary] last, that the customs duties of the Ottoman Empire should be increased from 8 to 11 % *ad valorem* in order to meet the deficit in the Budget which had been prepared for the 3 Macedonian vilayets, Lord Lansdowne addressed a note to His Exce[llence]y on the 27th of that month stating the conditions which H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t considered indispensable before they could assent even in principle to this proposal.

These conditions were, briefly, that His Majesty's Government should be satisfied that the financial needs of the Macedonian provinces had been correctly computed by the Turkish Officials, that the local revenues were collected to the best advantage, that the expenditure, both civil and military, was adjusted to the real needs of the administration; that the Customs generally would be administered in such a manner as to secure honest and efficient collection of the duties, and that there should be a definite assignment of the proceeds of the increased tariff to some competent authority entrusted with the collection and control not only of these funds, but of the local revenues which they are intended to supplement.

No attempt has yet been made by the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t to give satisfaction on any of these points, and so long as they maintain their present opposition to the financial commission which would be able to investigate some at least of them H[is] M[ajesty's] Government must decline to discuss the proposal which Musurus Pasha has again been instructed to bring forward.

Foreign Office, October 28, 1905.

(1) [Published A. & P. (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), pp. 81-2.]

No. 53.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. France 3704.

(No. 689.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 28, 1905.

On the 25th instant the French Ambassador informed me that the Turkish Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] in Paris had addressed a note to the French Gov[ernmen]t in which the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t asked that the increase of customs duties on goods imported into the Ottoman Empire should come into force from the 1st of Jan[uar]y next.

M. Cambon enquired whether H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t had received a similar communication and what reply they intended to return to it.

I have communicated to M. Cambon the contents of a memorandum which I have sent to the Turkish Ambassador to-day, copy of which is annexed.⁽¹⁾

I also enclose, for Y[our] E[xcellency]'s information, copy of a desp[atch] which I have addressed to H[is] M[ajesty's] Amb[assado]r at Constantinople, recording an interview with Musurus Pasha on this subject.⁽¹⁾

[I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.]

(1) [Not reproduced.]

No. 54.

*Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Therapia, October 29, 1905.*

F.O. Turkey 5401.

D. 4 A.M.

Tel. (No. 157.) Confidential.

R. 10 A.M.

Financial delegates. I hear that German Gov[ernment] are doing all in their power to persuade Sultan to yield as they feel that if they cannot prevent coercive measures being taken their position here will be severely compromised whether they participate in them or not. I believe Austrian and Russian Ambassadors have suggested to their Gov[ernmen]ts that in case of naval demonstration opportunity should be utilized for insisting on Porte extending the term of Münztteg Programme. They have not however as far as I know spoken to other ambassadors on the subject up to present moment. Idea is a good one particularly if the Powers insist at the same time upon acceptance of règlement drawn up by the delegates, as approved by ambassadors and upon the delegates being invested with supervisory powers over the judicial administration.

No. 55.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5401.

Therapia, D. October 30, 1905, 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 161.) Confidential.

R. October 31, 1905, 8 A.M.

My Russian colleague informs me confidentially that Count Goluchowski considers that Powers ought to be prepared with alternative coercive measure in case naval demonstration at Mitylene should prove ineffective, and that he has suggested Smyrna, and asked Count Lamsdorff for his opinion. Latter has asked Ambassador for his views, and Russian Ambassador said he was anxious to have my opinion before replying.

I said I thought it (? hardly) probable that the Sultan would resist, in face of naval demonstration at Mitylene, particularly if attended by seizure of official buildings and custom-house, which would be an easy operation, but that although I could only give purely personal opinion on a question of this importance, it seemed to me that there were great objections to demonstration at Smyrna, that the Consuls had recently, in a collective note, stated that political situation was precarious, owing to numbers of Moslem and Cretan refugees in the place, that presence of foreign ships with hostile intentions might provoke disturbances which military would be unwilling or unable to check, and that dislocation of trade would be very serious.

Russian Ambassador said that he entirely agreed in the view, and that he would tell Austrian Ambassador so in the evening. Should it be necessary to have any other objective point for a naval demonstration, I venture to think the Haiffa would be the best, but I did not say so to the Russian Ambassador.

No. 56.

*Mr. Spring-Rice to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**St. Petersburg, October 31, 1905.*

F.O. Russia 1706.

D. 7.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 213.)

R. 8 P.M.

With reference to report of naval demonstration in the Black Sea, Count Lamsdorff told French Minister yesterday that he has given full powers to the Russian

Ambassador at Constantinople to employ Russian naval forces to exercise pressure on Porte if required. He had no news himself as to operations of fleet owing to interruption of telegraphic communication.

No. 57.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Turkey 5398.

(No. 781.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Therapia, D. October 31, 1905.

R. November 6, 1905.

With reference to my despatch No. 749 of the 27th instant.⁽²⁾ I have the honour to transmit herewith to Your Lordship copy of a communication which I received from the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, giving an account of a message which had been conveyed to him by Nuri Bey on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs with reference to the refusal of the Sublime Porte to agree to the collective audience of the Sultan demanded by the Representatives of the Six Great Powers.

Baron Calice also gives the substance of the reply which he returned to Tewfik Pasha's message.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

Enclosure in No. 57.

Baron Calice to Sir N. O'Connor.

Son Excellence Nuri Bey venant de la part de S[on] E[xcellence] Monsieur le Ministre des Aff[aires] étrangères m'a fait la communication suivante :—

“ Que les Ambassadeurs peuvent comme par le passé demander individuellement des Audiences particulières de Sa M[ajesté] I[mpéria]le le Sultan, sans L'entretenir toutefois de la question de la commission financière, attendu que toutes les décisions à cet égard ont été prises par la Porte seule et que Sa M[ajesté] I[mpéria]le est tout-à-fait en dehors de la question. C'est donc la Porte seule qui est à même de recevoir des Ambassadeurs des communications à ce sujet et d'y répondre :

“ que d'ailleurs la demande d'une Audience collective étant sans précédent le Ministre des Aff[aires] [Etrangères] s'est abstenu de la soumettre à Sa M[ajesté] I[mpériale].”

J'ai répondu :

“ 1. que la demande avait été faite sur l'ordre des 6 Gouvernements ;

“ 2. que dans le cas présent tous les six Gouvernements sont engagés à obtenir le même but et que cela explique suffisamment la demande d'une Audience collective de leurs Ambassadeurs ;

“ 3. qu'admettant parfaitement que cette affaire est conduite par la Porte leurs représentations auprès de Sa Majesté auraient eu précisément pour but de démontrer la nécessité absolue que la Porte adopte leur proposition—proposition que jusqu'à présent elle a déclinée ;

“ 4. que ce refus ne saurait manquer d'avoir des conséquences pénibles pour le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté I[mpéria]le et que les six Gouvernements n'ont cru pouvoir se dispenser d'y attirer d'avance par leurs représentants la haute attention de Sa Majesté I[mpéria]le.”

Yenikeui, le 27 Octobre, 1905.

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), pp. 86-8.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 85-6. No. 51.]

No. 58.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Connor.

F.O. Turkey 5401.

Tel. (No. 196.)

Foreign Office, November 2, 1905.

Your tel[egram] No. 157 of Oct[ober] 29.⁽¹⁾

We agree with you in thinking that if Powers are driven to measures of coercion their demands should be reconsidered.

Unless this is done Porte will be encouraged whenever difficulties arise hereafter to persist in obstructing up to the last moment.

Acceptance of règlement, and power to supervise judicial administration seem to us essential conditions.

You should press this view upon your colleagues.

(¹) [*v. supra p. 88, No. 54.*]

No. 59.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Therapia, November 3, 1905.

F.O. Turkey 5401.

Tel. (No. 165.)

D. 7.50 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

Your telegram No. 196.⁽¹⁾

If we support Austro-Russian proposal for the prolongation of the period of the Mürzsteg Agreement, they can hardly refuse to include acceptance of the "règlement" in the demands presented in the event of coercive measures. But from the way German Ambassador is trying to reduce powers of the Financial Commission, as if he held an Ottoman brief, I think it unlikely that his Government will agree to any proposal including supervision of the judicial administration by the Commission. The Ambassador will certainly oppose it, and I consider it useless to broach subject to him. Its acceptance would be most valuable, and save an infinity of delay and trouble in the future. British Delegate expects the amended draft "règlement" will be sent to-day to all the Governments direct.

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 60.

Mr. Spring-Rice to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

St. Petersburg, November 5, 1905.

F.O. Russia 1706.

Tel. (No. 229.)

D. 6.53 P.M.

R. 8.0 P.M.

Naval demonstration.

Austrian Ambassador told me last night that communication would shortly be issued to the Powers by the two Governments recommending action described in Sir N. O'Connor's telegram No. 163. He says that German action is doubtful, and that Russian flag will be represented in Mediterranean, as the Russian Government have now decided against demonstration in the Black Sea.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Spring-Rice.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Russia 1697.

(No. 365.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 6, 1905.

The Russian Ambassador called upon me this morning, and made to me a communication in the following terms:—

In view of the Sultan having absolutely declined to grant a collective audience to the Ambassadors of the Powers, the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg had agreed to propose a naval demonstration in order to exercise pressure on the Sublime Porte.

In order to carry out the demonstration each of the Powers taking part in it should provide one vessel. Several vessels, of smaller size but of great speed, should be attached to this fleet (one at least by each Power), in order to serve as despatch boats and scouts.

The point of meeting would be the port of the Piræus. This port is all the more suitable for that purpose as it might serve as a centre for the cyphered telegraphic correspondence passing between the Governments, the Ambassadors and the Naval Commanders, from the commencement to the conclusion of the operations. The mere fact of the fleet assembling at the Piræus would be likely to produce a serious impression at Constantinople. It should remain there for three days and should then leave for Mitylene if news had not been received, in the meantime, that the Porte had given way. Two despatch boats should, however, be left at the Piræus, as one at least must always remain there for the cypher telegraphic service.

Upon arriving at Mitylene the fleet would, after notification had been made to the authorities, occupy the customs and telegraph offices, taking care, however, not to hamper commercial operations.

If, after a stay of eight days at Mitylene, there should be no result, the fleet would leave there one large and one small vessel, the latter to act as a despatch boat, and would proceed first to Lemnos and eventually to Tenedos in order to occupy the Customs and Telegraph Offices as at Mitylene.

The execution of the first as well as of the second part of this programme would be in the hands of the council of naval commanders, under the presidency of the senior officer present, who would also direct the operations.

The operations would be brought to an end as soon as the senior officer received news from Constantinople, by way of the Piræus, that the matter had been settled with the Porte.

The Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg were of opinion that the Powers who had accepted this programme of the coercive measures to be adopted, might inform their Ambassadors at Constantinople accordingly, instructing them at the same time to concert together in order to settle the date at which their respective vessels should arrive at the Piræus, as well as various other details relating to the matter in hand.

After communicating the substance of this proposal to the Prime Minister, who happened to be with me at the time, I informed His Excellency that the mode of proceeding suggested by the two Governments seemed to us appropriate, and that, subject to the discussion of any points of detail which might arise, we were fully prepared to fall in with it.

I said however that His Majesty's Government were of opinion that, if the Powers were to be put to the trouble and expense of a naval demonstration, they should certainly not be content with obtaining from the Sultan the mere recognition of the

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), pp. 88–9. This despatch was sent also to Sir E. Goschen as No. 103. In the copy sent to him the opening words were "The Austrian Ambassador."]

Financial Commission. We thought that His Majesty should be required to accept the Reglement which had resulted from the deliberations of the Delegates at Uskub, and also to undertake that the scheme of reforms to be elaborated by the Commission should include the reorganization of the Macedonian Courts, the deplorable condition of which was one of the great obstacles to the improvement of the situation. In our opinion, it was most important to bring home to the Sultan that the obstructive tactics which he had pursued could only defeat their own object. If, on the other hand, he were to find that after weeks and months of obstruction he was allowed to escape upon conditions identical with those which were open to him when the Powers first made known their wishes, he would be encouraged to pursue similar tactics on all subsequent occasions.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 62.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Goschen.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Austria 1361.

(No. 102.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 7, 1905.

The Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires asked me to-day whether I was able to tell him the names of the ships of war which His Majesty's Government would send to the Piræus for the purpose of taking part in the naval demonstration. I told Count Szechenyi that, so far as I was aware, the actual selection had not been made, although the Admiralty knew that they would probably have to send ships to the Piræus. But before orders were issued for this purpose it seemed to me that His Majesty's Government should know whether the proposal of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments was agreed to by the other Governments concerned, and also what those Governments had to say as to our suggestion that the Turkish Government should be required, not merely to recognise the Financial Commission, but to accept the reglement which had been drawn up by the Delegates at Uskub, and also to undertake that the Commission should be empowered to reform the Macedonian Tribunals.

Count Szechenyi asked me whether he was to understand that His Majesty's Government refused to take part in the naval demonstration unless these suggestions were accepted by the other Powers.

I said that I would not go so far as to say this. I hoped he would understand that our object was not to occasion unnecessary difficulties in the way of the adoption of the proposal of the two Powers, but to strengthen that proposal in such a manner as to render it improbable that we should be again called upon within a short interval of time to resort to further measures of coercion. I said that when these points had been disposed of, the Ambassadors at Constantinople would no doubt meet and come to an agreement as to the date at which the international ships should rendezvous at the Piræus. When these matters had been satisfactorily arranged our ships would be at once dispatched.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), p. 89.]

No. 63.

*Sir E. Egerton to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Rome, November 8, 1905.*

F.O. Italy 907.

D. 3.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 96.)

R. 7 P.M.

Your telegram No. 295.⁽¹⁾

Macedonia.

Austrian and Russian proposals respecting the naval demonstration have been accepted by Italian Government, subject to discussion of details by the Representatives of the Powers at Constantinople.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 64.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. France 3704.

(No. 708.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 10, 1905.

I told the French Minister this afternoon that questions had been addressed to me with regard to the choice of the naval officer who will command the British ships taking part in the naval demonstration at the Piræus. The combined ships would no doubt be commanded by the senior officer, and it might be as well that an understanding should be arrived at as to the choice of the Power to whom the direction of the movement should be entrusted. My personal view was that matters should be so arranged as to leave the supreme command to an Austrian admiral. The other Powers had been invited by Austria-Hungary and Russia to take part in the demonstration, and it therefore seemed reasonable that either an Austrian or a Russian officer should be allowed to take the command. As Russia would probably find some difficulty in sending any ship larger than a "stationnaire," it seemed to follow that the choice would fall upon Austria. M. Geoffray was disposed to agree with me, but desired to refer to the French Government before giving me an answer.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rore]d.—E.R.

No. 65.

*Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Pera, November 15, 1905.*

F.O. Turkey 5401.

D. 1.30 A.M.

Tel. (No. 173.) Confidential.

R. 8 A.M.

Naval demonstration.

I gather from the remarks made by German Amb[assador] at yesterday's meeting that his Gov[ernment] do not intend to send a ship to the Piræus or Mitylene.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir E. Goschen.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Austria 1361.

(No. 105.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 15, 1905.

Count Mensdorff told me to-day that the Austro-Hungarian Government would be glad to undertake the direction of the naval demonstration. It was their intention to send two ships, the "St. Georg" and the "Szigetvar."

His Excellency informed me that the Austro-Hungarian Government had received from their Ambassador at Constantinople a telegram to the same effect as that addressed to me on the 13th instant by Sir Nicholas O'Connor. The description which His Excellency had however received of the proposals to which the Ambassadors had agreed was somewhat fuller than that contained in Sir Nicholas O'Connor's telegram.

It went to show that the mandate of Hilmi Pasha, as well as that of the Civil Agents, was to be prolonged for two years. I observed upon this point that we had always contended that the original mandate expired this autumn, and that it could not be renewed without the concurrence of the other Powers.

His Excellency also said that the note which the Ambassadors were to present to the Porte to-day would contain the expression of a hope that the Porte would, by agreeing to the demands now made, spare the Powers the necessity of resorting to other measures. His Excellency enquired whether it would suit us to send our ships to the Piræus on the 22nd, and I promised to make enquiries of the Admiralty in regard to this.

I asked His Excellency whether he was aware of the demand which had been made for a right of supervising the judicial administration in Macedonia, but he was evidently without information upon this point.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [Published with omission of third and fourth paragraphs in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII. (Cd. 2816), pp. 90-1.]

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. T. Russell.

F.O. Germany (Prussia) 1615.

(No. 293.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 15, 1905.

I asked the German Ambassador to-day whether he had any information as to the intentions of the German Government with regard to the proposed naval demonstration. I had heard it confidently stated that the German Government did not mean to take part in it.

His Excellency said that he had no information upon the subject. He knew however that the German Government had no ships available in the Mediterranean.

I asked whether it was not the case that there was a German "stationnaire" which might have accompanied the other ships and upon which the German flag might have been flown. His Excellency was under the impression that the

“stationnaire” would be required for other purposes. I said that the absence of the German flag would no doubt lead to unfavourable comments.⁽¹⁾

I am, &c.

LANSDOWNE.

⁽¹⁾ [The decision was in fact taken by the Emperor William II on the 13th November in reply to a memorandum from Prince Bülow. *G.P.*, XXII, pp. 300-302.

The telegram from the German Foreign Office to their Ambassador at Vienna of 16th November officially stated the decision not to send a German ship, but simply to give moral support to the naval demonstration of Austria-Hungary, Russia, Italy, France and Great Britain. *G.P.*, XXII, p. 304.]

No. 68.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾

Pera, November 24, 1905.

F.O. Turkey 5401.

D. 11.35 A.M.

Tel. (No. 181.)

R. 2.15 P.M.

My Austrian colleague only told me last night that the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments addressed yesterday or the day before a warning note to the Bulgarian Servian and Greek Governments in connection with pressure being exercised on the Porte with a view to the reforms in financial administration and are inviting the other Powers to address a similar communication to them.

(The Note is as follows “As the efforts latterly resorted to by the Great Powers to secure the adhesion of the Porte to proposals which aim at providing the vilayets of Salonica, Kossovo, and Monastir with a proper financial administration have produced no result, the Powers find themselves compelled to exert pressure on the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t.

While the Powers regret that the obstinacy of the Porte obliges them to have recourse to such measures, they consider it to be their duty, in order to guard against any erroneous construction which might be put upon their action, at this juncture to make known their point of view as well as the principles on which their line of conduct is based.

The efforts made by Austro-Hungarian and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts to expedite the application of the reforms designed to improve the existing state of things in the above mentioned vilayets have not given all the results which these two Powers considered themselves entitled to expect.

This fact, however, cannot be attributed solely to the delays which the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t have allowed to intervene in applying in [*sic*] the reforms which they had undertaken to carry out. It is in part due to the rivalry which separates the different nationalities that compose the population of the vilayets a rivalry, which too frequently gives rise to sanguinary conflicts between groups of persons belonging to these nationalities as well as to criminal attacks on the life and property of peaceful inhabitants.

The Powers fully convinced that these outrages cannot fail to meet with the condemnation of all right minded persons, consider it their duty to declare that the efforts of the revolutionary groups which aim at keeping alive the disorder prevailing in the three vilayets are incapable of deflecting the Powers from the line of conduct which they have marked out for themselves and in which they are determined to persevere.

⁽¹⁾ [Paraphrased in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (*Cd.* 2816), p. 105. The text of the note in brackets is omitted there, but published on pp. 114-115. Lord Lansdowne replied by approving and supporting this move. Tel. No. 212 of November 25.]

While resolved not to neglect any effort which might contribute to the welfare of the population of these vilayets the Powers cannot tolerate attempts to disturb the political *status quo* of the Balkan Peninsula and in the event of any such attempt being made they will be compelled to oppose it.

The Powers therefore hope that the Gov[ernmen]ts of the Balkan States who cannot but profit by the improvement of the present state of affairs in those provinces of the Ottoman Empire which adjoin their frontier will see fit to support to the best of their ability the efforts of the Powers and that they will not hesitate to adopt without the least delay such measures as may be most efficacious to prevent anything which may tend to encourage and foster the revolutionary movement prevailing in the Ottoman Provinces which is fraught with disaster to the interests of the local populations.)

No. 69.

Memorandum communicated by Musurus Pasha, November 25, 1905.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Turkey 5419.

Dans sa réponse à la dernière Note collective des Ambassadeurs, la Sublime-Porte, en réitérant les considérations de ses communications antérieures, déclare de nouveau ne pouvoir accepter l'institution de la Commission financière qui, telle qu'elle est proposée, serait une innovation sans précédent dans les annales diplomatiques et constituerait une ingérence directe dans les affaires purement intérieures du pays, en portant une grave atteinte aux droits souverains de l'Empire, ainsi qu'à son intégrité garantie par les traités.

En ce qui concerne la demande de renouvellement du mandat des deux agents civils pour une période de deux ans, la Sublime-Porte se déclare disposée à y acquiescer à la condition que ce terme ne soit point prolongé à l'avenir et que leurs attributions restent les mêmes qu'auparavant.

Dès l'origine de cette question le Gouvernement Impérial a toujours témoigné la plus grande déférence envers les Puissances et accueilli favorablement les conseils qu'elles lui ont donnés pour l'adoption des mesures qu'elles croyaient les plus propres à assurer le bien-être des trois Provinces. Il a appliqué scrupuleusement et avec loyauté toutes les dispositions arrêtées dans ce but. Il ne saurait cependant aller jusqu'à admettre l'ingérence directe de fonctionnaires étrangers dans une branche de son administration intérieure, ce qui léserait ses droits souverains et son indépendance.

L'intention des Grandes Puissances n'est certainement pas de porter atteinte aux droits de l'Empire. Leur but ne peut être que d'assurer le fonctionnement régulier d'un rouage important de l'administration des trois Vilayets. Le Gouvernement Impérial, qui a déjà tant fait pour l'amélioration de la situation de ses Provinces et qui n'est pas moins désireux de compléter l'œuvre si loyalement poursuivie, est prêt à donner une nouvelle preuve de ses sentiments de conciliation et de sa déférence envers les Puissances, en utilisant le concours de quelques spécialistes financiers qui lui seraient recommandés et en les prenant à son service pour une période de deux ans.

Conscient de son bon droit, le Gouvernement Impérial est fermement décidé à ne pas se départir du point de vue auquel il s'est placé dans cette question et, dans ces conditions, tous moyens de pression auxquels les Puissances croient devoir recourir ne pourraient que froisser fortement les justes susceptibilités du pays et compliquer encore davantage la situation.

*Ambassade Impériale Ottomane, Londres,
le 25 Novembre, 1905.*

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), pp. 106-7.]

No. 70.

*Mr. Young to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Athens, November 25. 1905.*

F.O. Greece 760.

D. 1.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 40.)

R. 3 P.M.

Ships of International Squadron are now leaving Piræus. They expect to meet at Mytilene before 8 to-morrow morning.

Sent to Constantinople and Foreign Office.

No. 71.

*Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.⁽¹⁾**Pera, November 25. 1905.*

F.O. Turkey 5401.

D. 2.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 184.)

R. 3.45 P.M.

Naval Demonstration.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has just called and sounded me as to chances of the Powers accepting a compromise according to which the Delegates would enter Turkish service and be (? appointed) Financial advisers. He said that this would facilitate a solution and make it easier for the Ottoman Gov[ernment] to accept the other demands. I said I could only express my personal opinion which was that it was now too late for any compromise and that the governments having been forced into Naval Action were more likely to increase than to diminish their demands and that I thought that the Porte would do well to accede to our present terms while there was yet time to prevent further developments. H[is] E[xc]ellency said that the German Ambassador had refused to interfere and that he would see the Austrian Ambassador before reporting the result of his semi-official mission.

⁽¹⁾ [Paraphrased in A. & P. (1906). CXXXVII, (Cd. 2816), p. 107. Telegram No. 215. from Lord Lansdowne of November 26, 1905, approved the language of above.]

No. 72.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Connor.

F.O. Turkey 5401.

Foreign Office, November 25, 1905.

Tel. (No. 212.)

D. 2.45 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 181.⁽¹⁾

Warning to Bulgaria Greece and Servia.

Austro-Hungarian and Russian Ambassadors have made the same communication to me.

I have replied that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] are ready to instruct British Rep[resentati]ves at Sofia and Athens to join with their Austro-Hungarian and Russian colleagues in expressing a hope that the Bulgarian and Greek Gov[ernment]s will use their influence to discourage disorders and excesses of the kind which have lately been so prevalent in the Balkan Peninsula, adding that in the opinion of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] it would be most unfortunate if advantage should be taken of the action now being resorted to by the Powers in order to bring about further disturbances or to increase the area of the insurrectionary movement.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 95-6, No. 68.]

No. 73.

*Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Pera, November 27, 1905.*

F.O. Turkey 5401.

D. 12.50 A.M.

Tel. (No. 187.)

R. 7.15 A.M.

Following from His Majesty's ship "Lancaster" :—

"International squadron arrived, and having presented letter to Governor landed force at 1 P.M., occupied custom-house and telegraph office. Governor formally protests. All quiet. Pray inform Admiralty."

No. 74.

*Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.**Pera, November 27, 1905.*

F.O. Turkey 5401.

D. 3.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 188.)

R. 4.15 P.M.

I hear from authentic sources that on Turkish Ambassador informing C[oun]t Goluchowski two days ago that Porte was decided not to concede the reforms demanded by Powers, His Excellency replied that he was sorry to see the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t did not appreciate the friendly and conservative policy of the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t towards Turkey, and that if they persisted in their refusal the latter might be compelled to change their attitude.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The crisis was actually ended on the 5th December when the Porte submitted a Note to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Constantinople, virtually accepting the whole Allied demands. Much further tedious haggling about details followed, but in principle the Porte accepted defeat.]

No. 75.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir N. O'Connor.⁽¹⁾

F.O. Turkey 5391.

(No. 461.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 6, 1905.

The Turkish Ambassador informed me this afternoon that as the result of a recent exchange of views with the Representatives of the Six Powers, the Sublime Porte, in its desire to arrive at an understanding, had accepted the appointment of the members selected to compose the Financial Commission.

At the same time in order to render the powers of this Commission more in harmony with the Sovereign rights of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan and with the general laws of the Empire the Porte had introduced certain modifications of a nature to conciliate all interests.

The Sublime Porte was convinced that this solution would be duly and unanimously appreciated by the Representatives of the Powers, and that all the Governments would telegraph to their Representatives instructing them to return an affirmative reply.

It was needless to say that the Imperial Government could not make further concessions.

⁽¹⁾ [Published in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (*Cd.* 2816), p. 127.]

I told His Excellency that I noticed that his statement contained no description of the modifications which the Turkish Government desired to obtain. My reports were to the effect that they had asked for some which were wholly inadmissible, but it seemed to me useless that I should discuss the question with him as he had not yet received any instructions from the Turkish Government.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

[*ED. NOTE.*—The final Financial Règlement for Macedonia, accepted by the Sultan with the Powers' amendments, was dated 2nd January, 1906. Text is in *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (Cd. 2919), pp. 169–173.]

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ACTIVITIES OF BULGARS, SERBS, GREEKS
AND RUMANS IN MACEDONIA, 1902-7.

[ED. NOTE.—In October 1907 Austria-Hungary and Russia remonstrated with Bulgaria, Greece and Servia respecting their interpretation of Article 3 of the Münzsteg Programme. (v. p. 111 and *note*, p. 215, No. 169.) This seems the point at which a general summary of their activities in Macedonia, as distinct from those of Turkey and the Great Powers, may be inserted up to that date. The account is based on extracts from the Annual Reports of Bulgaria, Servia and Greece.]

I. Bulgarian Activities.

(A.)—*Extract from Annual Report for Bulgaria for the Year 1906.*

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir G. Buchanan, No. 1 of January 1, 1907.)

F.O. 371/202.

(a.) *The Greek and Servian Propagandas.* 44.⁽¹⁾

During the decade under review each successive Government was confronted by the issues raised by the Macedonian question. The Central Committee at Sophia had made the most of its opportunities, and, supported as it was by popular sentiment, was rapidly assuming the proportions of a State within the State. The situation, moreover, in Macedonia was becoming every year more complicated by racial conflicts, which did not fail to react on Bulgaria's relations with the other Balkan States. In 1896 communications had passed between the Greek and Bulgarian Governments with a view to arriving at a common understanding, without, however, leading to any tangible result. Early in the following year the Greeks attempted to raise a general insurrection; and there seems little doubt that it was the hope of acquiring possession of Macedonia, even more than the Cretan question, which drove them into their disastrous war with Turkey. Apart from vague historical traditions, their claim to Macedonia rests on the plea that the Church constitutes the test of nationality and that all adherents of the Patriarchate belong to the Hellenic race—a claim which once comprised both Bulgaria and Roumania. After the crushing defeat of 1897, the Greek propagandists in Macedonia decided that the cause of Hellenism could best be served by making common cause with the Turks against the Bulgarians. Nor was it only from the insidious attacks made by the Greeks that the position of the Bulgarians was being threatened; for, though they had profited by the Turco-Greek war to secure three new Berats for Bulgarian Bishops at Dibra, Monastir, and Strumnitza, the appointment of Firmilian as Servian Archbishop at Uskub struck a severe blow at their pretensions. The ambitions of Servia had, prior to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria, been directed to the acquisition of those provinces, and the unprovoked attack which she made on the Principality in 1885 had been prompted by the desire to find territorial compensation in Western Bulgaria. It was only after the failure of that enterprise that she turned her attention to Macedonia. Up to this time the Servians had been confined to the north-western portion of the Kossovo Vilayet, commonly known as Old Servia, while Uskub and the eastern districts were generally supposed to be Bulgarian. Between 1888 and 1898 a vigorous propaganda was carried on by priests and schoolmasters, and large sums of money were expended in the process of creating Serbs—a process which was encouraged by the Turks as an effective means of checking Bulgarian expansion. The encroachments of the Greek

(¹) [The numbers placed at the end refer to sections of the Annual Report.]

and Servian propagandas were also supported by Russia as a welcome counterpoise to the growing influence of Bulgaria. Engrossed as she was for the moment by the economic revolution that was proceeding within her Empire and by the development of her vast Asiatic dependencies, Russia desired to avoid a premature raising of the Balkan question. She had, moreover, in the summer of 1897 arrived at an understanding with Austria, on the basis of the maintenance of the *status quo* and of the free development of the Balkan States. Bulgaria was therefore warned that she must not embark on a policy of adventure.

(b.) *Activity of the Internal Organization. Consequences of the Vinitza Incident.* 45.

The summers of 1896 and 1897 had passed without any disturbance of order on the frontier. In Macedonia, however, the Internal Organization was not idle. The doctrine of revolt was being secretly preached, arms were being imported and the country mapped out into military zones, in each of which a permanent band was on duty, while the cadres were continually changed so that all the villagers in turn might undergo a period of training. Hitherto this work of preparation had proceeded without arousing any serious suspicions on the part of the Turks, but in November 1897 the plans of the Committee were disclosed by the discovery of a store of arms and ammunition at Vinitza, where a wealthy Turkish Bey had been murdered by Bulgarian brigands. The search instituted by the authorities in the neighbouring villages was carried out with the usual brutality; wholesale arrests were made, torture was applied to extract confession, and rape and robbery were committed by the soldiery. This incident had far-reaching consequences. On the one hand, it revealed to the Turks the existence of a wide-spread conspiracy, and consequently exposed the Bulgarian element to every sort of persecution. The priests and schoolmasters, as the intellectual leaders of the movement, became more especially objects of suspicion, and were subjected to a system of guarantees which virtually entailed the suspension of their functions. On the other hand, it led to a complete change in the tactics of the Internal Organization. The period of secret preparation, at which they had worked for five years, was brought to an abrupt close and a period of action inaugurated. The Committee was now transformed into a terroristic organization, whose decisions were executed by the bands. Every year which followed witnessed fresh excesses on the part of the Turks and fresh reprisals on the part of the Committee. Assassination was the only weapon which the latter possessed, and they did not hesitate to have recourse to it, more especially against the Greeks who acted as the secret police of the Turks and thus, as Mr. Brailsford remarks in his recent work on Macedonia, committed murder by proxy. Forced contributions, whether in money or in kind, were exacted from all persons within reach of the bands, and all villages were expected to shelter and protect them. Those Bulgarian villages which still acknowledged the jurisdiction of the Patriarch were the greatest sufferers. If they showed any inclination to join the Exarchate, they were liable to be denounced to the Turks by Greek priests and to lose the immunity from attack by the troops which their Greek patrons secured for them: if, on the contrary, they refused to do so, they were exposed to the vengeance of the Komitajis. Though the policy of the bands was to act on the defensive, they had between 1898 and the commencement of 1903 no less than 180 engagements with the Turkish troops.

(c.) *The Rival Committees. General Tzontcheff's Incursion into the Razlog District, 1902.* 46.

The reports which reached the Principality of Turkish excesses provided the Central Committee, or External Organization as it was also called, with fresh material for agitation, and under the direction of Boris Sarafoff, who was elected its President in 1898, it adopted methods at once criminal and reckless. Contributions to the cause

were extorted, the capture of Miss Stone was planned and successfully carried out, and Bulgaria was nearly involved in war with Roumania in consequence of the assassination at Bucharest of a Roumanian journalist who had published violent attacks on the Committee. While Sarafoff was awaiting his trial at Sophia on a charge of having incited to murder, the control of the External Organization had passed into the hands of Tzontcheff, an ex-General in the Bulgarian army, who was on terms of personal intimacy with Prince Ferdinand. His views as to Macedonia's future differed from those of the Internal Organization, for, while they desired the creation of a free and independent State, he had always advocated a policy of annexation. Sarafoff and his supporters were opposed to this policy, and, rallying to the cry of "Macedonia for the Macedonians," seceded from the External Organization. The differences thus existing between the leaders of the two rival Committees rendered common action almost impossible, and in the summer of 1902 General Tzontcheff brought matters to a crisis by crossing over into the Razlog district with several large bands. The peasantry of that district, though well supplied with arms, refused, however, to rise until their own leaders gave the signal, and Tzontcheff and his bands were soon driven back across the frontier. The natural consequence was that the peasantry were subjected to all the horrors of a "search for arms," and that several thousand refugees sought safety in Bulgaria.

(d.) Attitude of Bulgarian Government. Influence of Panславist Agents. 47.

The attitude of successive Bulgarian Governments towards the insurrectionary movement differed only in degree. While condemning the criminal practices of the Committees, they one and all sympathized with their aims and were powerless to suppress them altogether. Measures were, indeed, from time to time taken to prevent the passage of bands and the sale of arms, but the wooded hills near the frontier always remained the centre of the recruiting operations of the bands, while rifles were occasionally abstracted from the military stores. Whenever a crisis seemed imminent representations were made by the Powers at Sophia, but Austria and Russia, despite the understanding of 1897, did not always act cordially together. The attitude of M. Bakhmeteff and of the Panславist agents in the Balkans did not, moreover, tally with the assurances of the official Russia of St. Petersburg, while the activity of the Austrian Consuls in Macedonia was not altogether favourably viewed by the Russian Government. The presence of a Russian Grand Duke and of General Ignatieff at the fêtes held in the autumn of 1902 to commemorate the taking of the Shipka Pass was not calculated to damp the ardour of the Macedonian Committees, and the language held by the latter was a direct incentive to action. In a speech which he delivered from the balcony of the Russian Agency in the presence of the Prince and his Ministers, General Ignatieff invited the Bulgarians to strive to attain their national aspirations with Russia's help, and expressed the hope that the Great Bulgaria of the Treaty of San Stefano would one day be an accomplished fact.

(e.) Austro-Russian Reform Scheme. Attempt of Bulgarian Government to arrive at a Direct Understanding with the Porte. 48.

It was not long, however, before official Russia deemed it advisable to dissipate the hopes which General Ignatieff's language had aroused. In December 1902 Count Lamsdorff himself paid a short visit to Sophia, during which he made it clear that Russia had no intention of allowing the Committees to drag her into an armed intervention in the Balkans, and that, if Bulgaria attempted to realize her national aspirations by other than peaceful means, she would do so at her own risk and peril. He accompanied this warning with the promise that the Macedonian question should be taken in hand, and, on his return to Vienna, elaborated with Count Goluchowski a programme of reforms. The Sultan had, indeed, already anticipated such a step on the part of the Powers by promulgating a reform scheme of his own, of which the

principal feature was the appointment of Hilmi Pasha as Inspector-General of the three Macedonian vilayets. The Austro-Russian programme was grafted on the Turkish one. In order to insure the success of the mission entrusted to the Inspector-General, it was provided that Hilmi Pasha was not to be recalled, without the consent of the Powers, until after the expiration of three years; that the gendarmerie and police were to be assisted by foreign specialists; that the Christian element was to be introduced into both these forces, as well as into that of the rural guards: that an amnesty for political offences was to be granted: that the revenue of the three vilayets was to be applied, in the first instance, to local requirements under the control of the Ottoman Bank: and that the tithe system was to be reformed. These proposals, which came into force in February 1903, were not far-reaching enough to satisfy public opinion in Bulgaria.⁽¹⁾ Under pressure from Russia the Danef Government had just

(1) [The following despatch shows the opinion of the Bulgarian Exarch about this time:—

No. 76. Ed. Add.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey 5265.
(No. 166.) Confidential.
My Lord,

Constantinople, D. March 28, 1903.

R. April 6, 1903.

Being anxious to ascertain the views and opinions of the Bulgarian Exarch on the Macedonian question I called upon His Beatitude this afternoon and beg leave to report to Your Lordship the substance of his remarks.

His Beatitude began by saying that he was afraid the Austro-Russian Reforms would have very little result. They did not go far enough to satisfy the legitimate demands of the people, they made no provision whatsoever to improve the position of the literate and middle classes, and, further, he believed there was hardly any chance of the Sultan putting them, such as they were, into execution.

In his opinion an autonomous régime, of one sort or another, was the only solution of the present difficulty. Personally he did not desire separation from Turkey and he certainly preferred living under the Turkish flag to subjection to Russia but his co-religionists in Macedonia must obtain such liberty and security of life and property as was necessary for the development of their national aspirations and for the attainment ultimately of the position which their numerical superiority justified them in expecting.

He understood that when Russia decided to propose the reforms scheme to Turkey she insisted upon Prince Ferdinand suppressing the Revolutionary Committees in the Principality.

His Highness was not in a position to refuse. He had thrown in his lot with Russia but, while he apparently complied with her request, his Government secretly advised the Insurrectionary Leaders to keep up the political agitation. They could hardly do otherwise, for they were responsible for its creation, and they continued to regard it as the most effectual means of gaining their end.

The action taken by the Prince had nevertheless damped the courage and ardour of the local committees throughout Macedonia, for they realised the fact that without the full support of Bulgaria they were only sacrificing their lives without any hope of final success.

The plans for a general outbreak about this time were so far advanced that it was not easy to say exactly what would happen. Bands, partly composed of instinctive brigands, would probably continue their insurrectionary work, a state of political and social unrest would be maintained for the sake of the national cause, and a sort of guerilla warfare would prevail throughout the summer. He did not however think there would be a general insurrection, at present at all events.

His own policy was one of opportunism based on Monsieur Stambuloff's principle of keeping on friendly terms with Turkey while extracting concessions from her fears of foreign intervention. He was not in favour of violent measures, but he had not been consulted by the Insurrectionary Leaders till quite recently and he had refused to give any advice at the present juncture.

Were it possible he would be glad to come to a compromise with Turkey. Unfortunately there was no Turkish statesman with whom he could treat nor had there been one since the Sultan deprived Kiamil Pacha of power and office. Perhaps Prince Ferdinand might be able, if he visited Constantinople, to come to an understanding with the Sultan, but he was afraid that His Imperial Majesty, shrewd and intelligent though he undoubtedly was, had neither the courage nor steadiness of purpose to go through with so bold a policy. Besides, the Prince himself was in a very difficult position between the Committees on one hand and his fear of offending Russia on the other. He was confident that the Russian Government would not tolerate even the remote prospect of a big Bulgaria save under their own auspices, and he believed that their efforts would

dissolved the Macedonian Committees, but this fact did not prevent it secretly encouraging them to keep up the political agitation. In May, however, the Daneff Cabinet was replaced by a Stamboloffist Government, whose traditional policy had always been to cultivate good relations with Turkey, while extracting concessions by working on her fears of foreign intervention. Soon after his assumption of office General Petroff, true to these traditions, sent Natchovits on a special mission to Constantinople for the purpose of arriving at a direct understanding on the subject of Macedonia. The Bulgarian Government desired to obtain the consent of the Sultan to a form of communal autonomy, under which the Macedonians should be empowered to elect their Mayors, as well as their Municipal and Communal Councils. These latter were, in turn, to be charged with the appointment of the rural guards, tax collectors, and subordinate officials, while the communes were to be collectively responsible for the taxes due to the Imperial Exchequer. Apart from the advantages which such an arrangement offered from the Macedonian point of view, an understanding with Turkey would, the Government hoped, strengthen Bulgaria against Russia, whose attitude was causing them the gravest misgivings. Shortly before the fall of the late Administration Russia had put forward proposals for the cession of the ports of Varna and Bourgas, and it was feared that, when once she had got rid of her embarrassments in Manchuria, she would, by an expansion of the understanding of 1897, divide the Balkan Peninsula with Austria. Natchovits' mission, however, came to nothing, as the Imperial Government entrenched themselves behind the declaration that it was their first duty to put the Austro-Russian reform scheme into execution. The Russian Ambassador, moreover, intimated that his Government was opposed to a direct understanding between vassal and suzerain.

(f.) *The Insurrection of 1903. Strained Relations between Turkey and Bulgaria.* 49.

Meanwhile the progress of the reforms in Macedonia was being impeded by the weakness and indifference of the Ottoman Government, by the opposition of the Albanians, and by the turbulence of those for whose benefit they had been designed. As a consequence, moreover, of the dynamite outrages committed at Salonica at the

be directed to frustrate anything approaching a close understanding between the Vassal and the Sovereign.

According to his calculation, there were 1,000,000 Bulgarians in the Roumelian Provinces, of whom 800,000 were Exarchists and 200,000 Patriarchists. The latter would return to the Exarchate when religious freedom and equality existed. The Greeks numbered from 300,000 to 400,000 mostly in the southern provinces; the Servians 200,000 mostly in the Kossovo Vilayet; the Koutzo Wallachs 60,000, scattered throughout the three vilayets, and the Turks from 5 to 600,000. Under these circumstances he did not think the Bulgarians need be afraid of racial competition.

I found His Beatitude inclined to talk so freely and confidentially that I interrupted him as little as possible.

I pointed out however the great danger of encouraging the insurrectionary bands and committees, whose action was steeping the country in crime and was likely to bring incalculable misfortunes upon his co-religionists without any corresponding result.

The European Powers, I said, expected the scheme of Reforms to be given a fair trial; they lost no opportunity of pressing upon the Imperial Government the absolute necessity of improving the administration and ameliorating the condition of the inhabitants, but if their efforts only led to crime and outrages on the part of the revolutionary committees, the public opinion of the world would be turned against them and the cause His Beatitude had so much at heart would suffer. I sincerely hoped His Beatitude would use the immense power and influence which he possessed both in Bulgaria and Macedonia on the side of order and moderation, and I believed that in doing so at the present moment he would in the end best serve the interests of his compatriots.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

Sir N. O'Connor's language was approved by Lord Lansdowne in despatch No. 97 of April 11, 1903.]

end of April by the extremist section of the Revolutionary Organization, the position of the Bulgarian element had become almost unbearable. Wholesale arrests had been made, the most stringent repressive measures enforced, and the grossest cruelties perpetrated, both by the regular and irregular troops. The Committee met violence with violence, and, as the Greeks abetted the Turks with their favourite weapons of espionage and denunciation, the Bulgarians exacted retribution by means of assassination. The preparations for a general rising were still far from complete, but circumstances were forcing the hands of the insurgent leaders, and early in August the signal was given. The insurrection was confined to the Vilayets of Monastir and Adrianople, and in the latter the insurgents were, unfortunately, encouraged by the dispatch of a Russian squadron to the port of Iniada, in connection with the assassination of the Russian Consul at Monastir. Late in September General Tzontcheff crossed the frontier and co-operated with the local Committees in the Melnik district, but by the end of October the insurrection had been everywhere suppressed. The Bulgarian Government, whom the outbreak had taken by surprise, had done what they could to prevent the passage of bands, but, as sympathy with the insurgents grew in intensity, they dared not resort to drastic and effective measures for fear of provoking an anti-dynastic movement. The feeling of resentment, indeed, aroused by the methods of repression to which Turkey had recourse had strained the relations between the two countries almost to breaking point. There were reasons, however, which made the Bulgarian Government genuinely desirous for the maintenance of peace. Such a course was dictated to them not only by their unpreparedness for war, but also by mistrust of the drift of Russian policy. Russia had throughout been playing what appeared to them a double game. While the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople was advocating the stern repression of the insurrection, the Russian Agent at Sophia was supporting the cause of the insurgents, and the policy of both seemed directed to bringing about a breach between Turkey and Bulgaria, which would furnish Russia with a pretext for intervention. The concentration of a large body of Turkish troops in the north-western corner of the Adrianople Vilayet led to the mobilization of 30,000 reservists on the side of Bulgaria, and in the month of September war seemed imminent. Thanks, however, to the pressure brought to bear by the Powers, the danger was averted, and a mutual demobilization was eventually agreed on.

** [[The following are three important documents illustrating the position :

No. 77. Ed. Add.

Mr. Elliot to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Turkey (Bulgaria) 5295.

(No. 233.)

My Lord,

Sophia, D. September 14, 1903.

R. September 17, 1903.

General Petroff has just sent the Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to me with a copy of a telegram despatched yesterday to the Bulgarian representatives abroad, which His Excellency requests His Majesty's Government to consider as equally addressed to themselves.

As the substance of it, with the exception of the appeal to the Powers, was conveyed in my telegram No. 36 of the 12th instant, I confine myself to sending Your Lordship the Bulgarian communication herewith by post.

I have, &c.

F. ELLIOT.

Enclosure in No. 77.

M. Petrov to the Bulgarian Representatives at Paris, St. Petersburg, and Vienna.

Le 31 Aout (13 Septembre), 1903.

Les prévisions du Gouvernement Princier, exposées dans ma dépêche du 16 (29) Juin dernier No. 236, se confirment point par point.

Le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman poursuit, d'une part, systématiquement et sans pitié, l'extermination de la population bulgare des Provinces de la Turquie d'Europe; il

continue, d'autre part, à mobiliser son armée pour être à même de la concentrer aussi rapidement que possible à la frontière bulgare, ce qui autorise à supposer qu'il a l'intention d'entreprendre, au moment opportun, une action militaire contre la Principauté.

Le Gouvernement Princier ne peut plus rester indifférent en présence d'une pareille situation, qui est de nature à amener fatalement un conflit armé entre la Turquie et la Bulgarie, si les Grandes Puissances ne font pas entendre à la Sublime Porte des conseils de sagesse et de modération.

Le Gouvernement Bulgare considère donc qu'il est de son devoir de faire appel aux sentiments de justice et d'humanité des Grandes Puissances, en les priant de sauver toute une population chrétienne de l'extermination complète qui la menace et d'intervenir auprès du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman à l'effet de rapporter les ordres de mobilisation ainsi que ses mesures de concentration militaires qui ne sont nullement justifiées en regard de l'attitude correcte du Gouvernement Princier.

Je Vous prie, Monsieur l'Agent, de communiquer ce qui précède au Gouvernement auprès duquel Vous êtes accrédité, en exprimant l'espoir qu'il voudra bien apprécier notre démarche comme une nouvelle preuve des dispositions loyales du Gouvernement Princier et de la ferme résolution où il a toujours été d'éviter tout ce qui, de sa part, aurait pu compromettre la paix. Mais si, à la suite de cette démarche, nous ne recevons pas des assurances de nature à dissiper nos appréhensions sur ce qui se passe actuellement en Turquie, nous serons obligés de prendre les mesures nécessaires pour être prêts à toute éventualité et pour nous mettre à l'abri de toute surprise.

Je Vous autorise à donner lecture de la présente dépêche à Son Excellence le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères et à Lui en laisser copie, s'Il le désire.

No. 78. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Elliot.

F.O. Turkey (Bulgaria) 5292.
(No. 46.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 21, 1903.

I have received your Des[patch] No. 233 of the 14th instant enclosing a copy, with which General Petroff has supplied you, of the telegraphic Despatch addressed on the 18th inst[ant] by the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t to their Repres[entati]ves abroad. H[is] E[xcellency] requested that this communication might be considered by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t as addressed to themselves, and I have now to give you the following instructions with regard to it:

You should inform General Petroff that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t have watched with the deepest regret the recent course of events in Macedonia. It is in their opinion impossible to acquit of blame either those who have been concerned in the insurrection or those who have been engaged in suppressing it. The Revolutionary Bands wh[ic]h the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t have apparently found themselves quite unable to restrain from incursions into Turkish territory, have been guilty of serious outrages perpetrated with a callous disregard of their effects upon the innocent persons who suffered by them.

Nor can such outrages be excused upon the ground that the Turkish troops have upon their side been guilty of scandalous excesses.

His Majesty's Government have repeatedly impressed, and will continue to impress, upon the Turkish Government the absolute necessity of restraining their troops from the commission of such excesses, and they have received from the Sublime Porte assurances that this advice will not be disregarded.

General Petroff refers to the fact that the Turkish Government have recently ordered the mobilisation of a large Turkish force, and the concentration of a portion of it near the Bulgarian frontier, as a proof that a Turkish invasion of Bulgaria must be regarded as imminent; and he requests that His Majesty's Government will join the other Powers in requiring the Turkish Government to desist from these preparations, and to cancel the orders which it has already issued.

His Majesty's Government do not consider that they would be justified in requiring the Turkish Government to abstain from measures of precaution which are essential so long as armed bands continue to cross the Turkish frontier.

They do not, however, believe that these measures portend aggressive action against the Principality.

His Majesty's Government are glad to observe from the language of the penultimate paragraph of the circular that the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t have declared their determination to avoid any action which might have the effect of endangering the public peace. If however the words which follow the passage containing this important declaration are intended to suggest that unless the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t desist from taking the measures of precaution of which the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t complain, the latter will

resort to aggressive measures on their own account, you should inform General Petroff that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] strongly deprecate a resort to such action, which would have no effect in mitigating the deplorable condition of Macedonia, but would, on the contrary, add yet another element of danger to a condition of things already sufficiently dangerous.

His Majesty's Government are convinced of the necessity of remedial measures, and they are at this moment in communication with the Powers most concerned in regard to the position of affairs in Macedonia. They desire in these circ[umstance]s to express in the strongest manner their hope that the Bulgarian Government will, in the present critical state of affairs, be careful to avoid language or action of a provocative character.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 79. Ed. Add.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Elliot.

F.O. Turkey (Bulgaria) 5296.
Tel. (No. 38.)

Foreign Office, September 24, 1903.
D. 12 Midnight.

Macedonia. Your tel[egram]s Nos. 39 and 40.

You are authorized to inform the Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs that neither Turkey nor Bulgaria must expect the support of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] in resisting either openly or secretly the realization of the programme of reforms already promulgated.

You should add that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] are pressing, and will continue to press, the Turkish Gov[ernment] for the more effective application of these reforms and are consulting the other Powers as to possibility of further remedial measures.]] **

(g.) *The Mürzsteg Reform Scheme, October 1903. 50.*

The only result attained by the insurrection was to bring home to Europe the gravity of the situation, as well as the conviction that the Austro-Russian reform scheme had proved a complete failure. Lord Lansdowne had already in September suggested that the time had come for the adoption of measures of a more thorough and practical kind, to be enforced by pressure of a more direct and convincing character, and the extended scheme of reforms concerted by Count Lamsdorff and Count Goluchowski at Mürzsteg in October 1903 was due mainly to his initiative. The Mürzsteg programme did not, indeed, go as far as Lord Lansdowne's original proposals, which had included the appointment of a Christian Governor-General, but His Majesty's Government gave it their support, while reserving to themselves the right to propose such alterations as might seem necessary to render it more effective. The principal points in the new scheme were the appointment of an Austrian and a Russian Civil Agent as assessors to Hilmi Pasha, the reorganization of the gendarmerie by a staff of foreign officers representing all the five Powers, the rearrangement of the administrative areas on a racial basis, the reorganization of the Judicial Administration, and financial provisions for the return of the refugees and for the rebuilding of the houses and churches destroyed during the suppression of the insurrection. While some of these provisions were received with satisfaction at Sophia, the Mürzsteg scheme, as a whole, was vitiated in the eyes of the Bulgarian Government by the fact that the control of its application was vested exclusively in the hands of Austria and Russia, the two most self-interested and reactionary members of the European Concert. The absence, moreover, of any mention of an amnesty, under which the insurgents might be induced to surrender and the refugees encouraged to return home, as well as the exclusion of the Adrianople Vilayet from the operation of the reforms, provoked much adverse criticism.

(h.) *Growing Mistrust between Vassal and Suzerain. Effect of War in the Far East. 51.*

Towards the close of 1903 Natchovits had been appointed Diplomatic Agent at Constantinople, but the negotiations for a direct understanding, which he had been instructed to resume, made but little progress owing to the growing mistrust with

which the two Governments regarded each other's proceedings. The large expenditure being incurred by Bulgaria on armaments made Turkey suspicious of her professions of friendship, while the concentration of large bodies of Turkish troops near the frontier was regarded by Bulgaria as the precursor of invasion. The situation, however, was considerably modified by the outbreak of the war in the Far East, for, despite their apprehension of Russian intervention, the Bulgarian Government had always cherished the comforting conviction that Russia would come to their assistance should a crushing disaster befall them in a war with Turkey. Apart, moreover, from this fear of finding themselves isolated in the hour of defeat, they were preoccupied by the idea that Austria was about to take advantage of Russia's embarrassments to occupy the northern districts of Macedonia. In order, therefore, to deprive Turkey of any pretext for an attack on the Principality, they instructed Natchovits to press on the conclusion of an arrangement which would place the relations between vassal and suzerain on a more friendly footing. Such an Agreement was signed on the 8th April, 1904.⁽²⁾ The negotiations had, at the last moment, nearly broken down, owing to Bulgaria insisting that it should include a provision for the extension of the Mürzsteg reform scheme to the Adrianople Vilayet. Russia, the Bulgarian Government believed, had earmarked that vilayet as her share of the spoils in the eventual partition of the Balkans, and they were confirmed in this view by the pressure which the Russian Government now brought to bear in order to prevent them raising the question. It was one which, Count Lamsdorff declared, must be left to Russia to bring forward at her own convenience, and the Bulgarian Government had to be content with certain vague assurances which the Sultan consented to give Natchovits on the subject. The Turco-Bulgarian Agreement was, nevertheless, a moral success for General Petroff's Government, as not only did it remove the danger of a conflict, but it conferred on the Principality the right of insisting, equally with the Great Powers, on the strict execution of the reforms.

(ij.) *Turco-Bulgarian Agreement, 1904.* 52.

According to its terms Bulgaria engaged to prevent the formation of bands on her territory, to punish severely all those who, after committing acts of a nature to disturb public order in the neighbouring provinces, had taken refuge in the Principality, and to prevent the introduction into those provinces of arms and explosives. Turkey on her side undertook to carry out the reforms agreed on under the Mürzsteg programme, to grant a general amnesty for political offences, to repatriate the refugees who during the past two years had fled to Bulgaria, to restore their lands, and to assist them in rebuilding their houses. Further, a Mixed Turco-Bulgarian Commission was to be appointed to examine various outstanding questions, and to provide for a better supervision of the frontier. Special clauses, moreover, provided for the abrogation of the restrictions on Bulgarian trade and for the eligibility of Bulgarians for civil and judicial employment. The obligations thus undertaken by the two Governments were more than either was able or prepared to fulfil, and before the end of the year mutual accusations of bad faith once more embittered their relations. A general amnesty had been immediately proclaimed, but the Bulgarians protested that proper effect was not being given to it, as regarded either the clergy or the schoolmasters, and that consequently many of the Bulgarian schools in Macedonia remained closed for want of teachers. They further complained that many of those who had returned under the amnesty were being arrested for offences committed prior to its publication. It was, however, with the question of the repatriation of the refugees—some 25,000 in number—that the greatest difficulty arose. On the Macedonian frontier the repatriation worked more or less smoothly,

(2) [A valuable Memo. by Mr. Alwyn Parker on this subject was written 2 Dec., 1904, but is not reproduced here on account of its length.]

but on the side of Adrianople the question was complicated by the fact that much of the land belonging to the refugees had been made over to Mussulmans, and the difficulties placed in the way of their return nearly led to a rupture of diplomatic relations. During the spring and summer of 1905 a certain number of them were repatriated, but the remainder, amounting to 2,000 or 3,000, gave up all idea of returning, and settled permanently in the Principality.

** [[ED. NOTE.—This despatch shews the attitude of Bulgaria to the Reforms in 1904.

No. 80. Ed. Add.

Sir J. Kennedy to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Roumania 160.

(No. 17.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Bucharest, D. April 10, 1904.

R. April 14, 1904.

The Bulgarian Diplomatic Agent, who has just returned to his Post here from a visit to Sofia, assures me that it is at present the earnest desire of the Bulgarian Government and of the insurrectionary leaders in Macedonia to avoid complications or war, and to give the gendarmerie organisation scheme a fair opportunity of establishing a period of order and justice in Macedonia.

M. Dimitroff said that his Government was encouraged to remain quiet because of the expressions of sympathy and even of possible intervention which had reached them, chiefly from England, and also from France and Italy, on behalf of the Macedonian population.

No confidence in the Establishment of reform had been felt so long as the negotiations with the Sultan were conducted solely by Russia and Austria who were generally suspected of a design to effect by degrees, under cover of reforms, a partition of European Turkey: now that five Powers had begun to take concerted action, confidence in the future had been gained and the example of Crete was frequently referred to.

It was reported at Sofia, continued M. Dimitroff that Austro-Hungarian troops would occupy the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar as far as Mitrovitza with the concurrence of the great Powers, but to the despair of Serbia and Montenegro, also that the Sandjak of Uskub, where Bulgarians predominated, had been allotted to the Austrian gendarmerie officers; on the other hand, satisfaction was expressed at Sofia at the probability of the Sandjaks of Drama and Serres being allotted to England and France respectively because these districts would probably be the scene of Bulgarian operations in the event of military action and moreover Drama being near the sea and the nearest Sandjak to the Adrianople Vilayet and to the Dardanelles would be the best position for the British gendarmerie occupation.

M. Dimitroff dwelt on the great political advantage which might result to Italy by the assignment to her gendarmerie of the Sandjak of Monastir, a city which is the real capital of Macedonia, and of strategic importance, situated moreover on the old Roman road which runs from the Port of Durazzo to Monastir through a part of Albania which is coveted by Italy. In discussing the above subject he suggested that Albania might be made autonomous, the northern portion to be placed under Austrian and the southern under Italian protection.

M. Dimitroff also informed me that the Bulgarian Government had almost agreed to buy the Creuzot cannon which had been destined for the Boers: the Creuzot Company had offered favourable terms for payment and proposed also to change, for the latest models, the cannon which had been pronounced defective by the Bulgarian Military Commission. The Bulgarian Government had however now applied to the Krupp Company.

Throughout his conversation, M. Dimitroff gave me to understand that the Bulgarian Government were in favour of the autonomy of Macedonia and that they in no respect counted on the support of Russia.

I have, &c.

J. G. KENNEDY.

P.S.—Monsieur Dimitroff also informed me that Monsieur Natchevitch, the Bulgarian Diplomatic Agent at Constantinople, had failed to obtain any assistance from the Representatives of Russia and Austria in support of his efforts to induce the Sultan to grant administrative reforms in the Vilayet of Adrianople on his own initiative.

J. G. K.]**

(B.)—*Extract from Annual Report for Bulgaria for the Year 1907.*

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir G. Buchanan, No. 109, of December 26, 1907.)

(a.) *Attitude of the [Bulgarian] Government towards the Bands.* 3.

F.O. 371/202.

From the very beginning of the year the Bulgarian press had complained that the Government was too much occupied with the internal situation, and that it was showing a strange indifference to what was passing on the other side of the frontier. The Macedonian organization, demoralized by the death of so many of its leaders and by its want of funds, was incapable of taking any strong action, while the Government was anxious not to lose the credit which its correct attitude had gained for it with the Powers. The energy, however, with which the Greek and Servian propaganda were being pressed, with what was believed to be the secret connivance of the Porte, gradually led to a recrudescence of activity on the part of the Bulgarian Committees. In April an understanding is said to have been arrived at between the adherents of Groueff, who had been killed last winter by the Turks, and those of Saraffoff for common action against the Greek and Servian bands, while Sandansky, who held to his independence, was to be given a free hand in the Serres district. This agreement, if indeed it was ever seriously made, failed entirely to accomplish its object, as the Macedonian organization has never been more disunited than at present. Its former leaders, who, whatever their faults, were for the most part patriots at heart, have been replaced by men of a different stamp, of whom many are little better than professional brigands, while many of them are well known to spend on their own pleasure the greater part of the funds which they collect for the revolutionary cause. The military measures taken by the Turks against the bands are, moreover, far more effective than they were some years ago, while, apart from the small contributions which the two Macedonian members of the Ministry probably give it out of the funds at their disposal, the Government no longer affords it any material support. They do, however, assist it indirectly by shutting their eyes to what goes on in the frontier districts, and by never attempting to arrest any of the insurgent leaders who cross over from Macedonia to spend the winter in the Principality. Thus, though it may be technically correct to assert, as the Government does, that no bands are organized on Bulgarian territory, groups of from three to six men are continually crossing backwards and forwards; and so long as Saraffoff, Sandansky, and other insurgent leaders are allowed to move about freely, so long will the bands in Macedonia receive small but constant reinforcements from Bulgaria. The Macedonian population in the Principality numbers over 150,000, and while Prince Ferdinand is haunted by the dread of assassination, the Government is too much afraid of provoking internal disorders to order the arrest of those who virtually direct the action of the bands from its territory. The Government have been accused by the Greeks of allowing officers in the active army to take service with the bands, but no authenticated case of this kind occurred during the past year. In the month of June, however, three non-commissioned officers and some thirty men deserted from a regiment at Philippopolis and succeeded in crossing the frontier. Some of them appear to have joined a band that was cut to pieces by the Turkish troops in the Serres district early in August, but seventeen eventually returned. The Minister of War, on being questioned by Prince Ferdinand as to the alleged desertions from other regiments, gave His Royal Highness the formal assurance that, with the exception of the case at Philippopolis, not a single man had left the colours in any other regiment, and that the army had been warned that desertion was an offence which would be punished without mercy.

(b.) *Friendly Representations made by His Majesty's Government in September [1907].* 4.

In consequence of the recrudescence of the activity of Bulgarian bands in the Sanjak of Serres and of the attempt to capture Colonel Elliot, His Majesty's Govern-

ment early in September caused official but friendly representations to be made at Sophia, with a view to inducing the Bulgarian Government to prevent the formation of bands on their territory, and to bring pressure to bear on the Macedonian organization in order to put a stop to the methods of terrorism and violence employed by the bands. M. Stancioff met these representations by asserting that the Bulgarian Government had not departed, and would not depart, from the correct attitude which they had maintained during recent years. While denying that the bands received either support or encouragement in the Principality, he contended that the unfriendly attitude of Turkey rendered it very difficult for the Government to take drastic measures for the suppression of the bands.

(c.) *Austro-Russian Note Verbale respecting Interpretation of Article 3 of the Mürzsteg Programme.* 5.

Early in October the Governments of Austria-Hungary and Russia addressed a *note verbale* to the Cabinets of Athens, Belgrade, and Sophia on the subject of the interpretation to be placed on Article 3 of the Mürzsteg programme.⁽¹⁾ This communication, which was supported by the Representatives of France, Germany, Great Britain, and Italy, was one which, M. Stancioff said, could not but command his sympathy, seeing that it was the Bulgarian element that had of late years suffered from the encroachments of Greek and Servian bands. In a written reply, which he subsequently addressed to the Austrian and Russian Agents, he pointed out that Bulgaria had all along contended for the principle of the integrity of Macedonia, and had opposed its division into three separate spheres of influence, as desired by Greece and Servia. In Article 3 of the Mürzsteg programme the Government had only seen a measure tending to create a single province with natural boundaries, composed of certain portions of the Vilavets of Salonica, Uskub, and Monastir, and to modify the administrative subdivisions of that province in a manner calculated to provide a more rational grouping of its different nationalities. In conclusion, he submitted the five following measures, which were, in the opinion of the Bulgarian Government, indispensable to the success of the reforms proposed by the Powers:—

1. The precise delimitation of the territory comprised in the area of the reforms.
2. A fresh administrative subdivision of that territory.
3. An effective control over all disputes respecting nationality, churches, and schools.
4. A census of the population.
5. Reorganization of the administration of justice and of the police.

(d.) *Influence of the Exarchate. Further representations made by Great Britain, Austria-Hungary, and Russia.* 6.

The renewed activity of the Bulgarian bands was viewed with no greater favour by the Exarch than by the Great Powers. His Beatitude, who had always advocated a policy of pacific penetration, had endeavoured in the spring to arrive at an understanding with the Grand Vizier, under which the Bulgarian Church was to be allowed to enjoy its rights and privileges on the express condition that the Exarch would prevent the clergy and schoolmasters under his jurisdiction from participating either directly or indirectly in the insurrectionary movement. His Beatitude appears to have done his best to carry out his part of the bargain, and the measures which he took against recalcitrant priests and schoolmasters were in many cases so severe as to cause considerable tension between the Exarchate and the leaders of the Bulgarian propaganda. But neither the Exarch's influence nor the friendly representations of the Powers succeeded in putting an end to the outrages of the bands; and in November His Majesty's Government again called the serious attention of the Bulgarian Govern-

⁽¹⁾[Published in A. & P. (1908), CXXV, (Cd. 4076), pp. 731-4.]

ment to these crimes, pointing out that attacks, like those made on the villages of Rakovo and Negovan, though provoked by the murder of Bulgarians by Greeks, would render the action which the Powers had recently taken at Athens entirely abortive. The Bulgarian Government was, therefore, urged to use all its influence with the internal organization with a view to restraining the activity of the bands. A few days later the Austrian and Russian Representatives were instructed by their respective Governments to speak to M. Stancioff on the subject of the bands, but the friendly advice which they gave him concerned rather the measures to be taken to prevent their passage across the frontier than the question of influencing the action of those actually in Macedonia. As a result of these representations M. Stancioff, in the statement which he made in the Sobranje a few days later on foreign affairs, indirectly condemned the bands by declaring that they were, in the opinion of the Powers, the chief obstacle to an improvement of the situation in Macedonia, and that the continuance of the present racial conflicts could but promote the ends of those who did not desire to see the pacification of that province. In a lengthy Memorandum, which he subsequently communicated to His Majesty's Agency, he maintained that it was unjust to hold the Bulgarian Government responsible for what took place on the other side of the frontier, pointing out that the insurrectionary movement was Macedonian by origin and organization, and had always been directed against the abuses of the Turkish Administration and not against the Greeks. The responsibility for the present war of races rested, he contended, with the latter, as their bands were not recruited in Macedonia, but in Greece or Crete, and had been organized for the sole purpose of terrorizing the Bulgarian element, whose progress and expansion had become a serious danger to the cause of Hellenism. While the language used by M. Stancioff in the Sobranje is satisfactory, so far as it goes, and while he himself, like an ever increasing number of his countrymen, undoubtedly realizes all the evils that the bands are bringing upon the Bulgarian element in Macedonia, and sincerely desires to put an end to them, he does not possess the necessary influence to impose his own views on his colleagues, of whom two, including the head of the Stamboloffist party, are unfortunately Macedonians by birth.

(e.) *Assassination of Boris Sarafoff and Garvanoff.* 7.

The rivalries and the discord which have so long existed in the ranks of the Internal Organization, have had a tragic sequel in the assassination at the beginning of the present month of Boris Sarafoff, the most popular of the insurgent leaders, and Garvanoff, one of the most prominent members of the Central Committee at Sophia. The motives which inspired the crime would appear to be as follows. At a meeting of the leaders of the various sections of the Organization, which was held in the late summer, Sandansky, the head of the terrorist group, proposed that all moneys received from the Government or from other sources should form a common fund, to be administered by a special Committee. This proposal did not receive the support of Sarafoff, who wished to keep the control of the Organization and of its funds in his own hands. The two leaders were, moreover, divided as to the immediate policy to be pursued, as, while Sarafoff regarded the Macedonian question from a purely Bulgarian point of view, and advocated preparations for a movement on a large scale next spring, Sandansky, whose partisans are largely composed of international anarchists, preferred to adhere to his terroristic methods, and to work for the eventual creation of a Macedonian province entirely independent of Bulgaria. The fact that Sarafoff was known to enjoy the protection of the Government and to receive occasional pecuniary assistance from some of its members, completed the breach. His death was decided on two months ago, when a meeting was convoked at which lots were drawn as to who was to carry out the sentence. The lot fell on Panitza, one of the insurgent leaders who took part in the attempted capture of Colonel Elliot last summer. The murder was carried out in the most cold-blooded and treacherous manner. Panitza, who had gained Sarafoff's confidence by ostensibly deserting the Sandansky

faction, dined in the former's house in company with Garvanoff, on the eve of leaving for Macedonia to take command of a band, which had been organized and financed by Sarafoff. As Sarafoff and Garvanoff were accompanying him to the door, he suddenly drew a revolver and shot them both dead. He made good his escape through a back yard, and has so far succeeded in avoiding capture. Sandansky, who had himself been in Sophia, took care to leave a few days before the murder was committed; but among the Macedonians who have since been arrested, is Tcherموpeeew, his chief associate. The assassination of Sarafoff is a serious blow not only to the Internal Organization, but to the Government itself, as, owing to the relations existing between him and M. Ghenadieff, the head of the Stamboloffist party, they were able to keep the direction of the Macedonian movement to a great extent in their own hands. It has also revealed the fact that Sophia has been allowed to become the rendezvous of all the most prominent leaders of the insurrectionary movement, and that some of those leaders appear bent on introducing into Bulgaria the same terroristic methods to which they so often have recourse in Macedonia. Whether or not this crime will, as is generally apprehended, lead to others of a like nature, the fear of meeting with Sarafoff's fate will not tend to encourage either the Prince or the Government to take energetic measures for the suppression of the bands or for the arrest of their leaders.

No. 81. Ed. Add.

** [[*Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.*

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir George Buchanan,

Foreign Office, January 2, 1906.

I have read with much interest the account of your conversation with Prince Ferdinand.⁽²⁾ I believe it is recognised, even by those who take the most active and keen interest in Macedonian reforms, that the attitude of Lord Lansdowne with regard to them was one, not of indifference, but of great sympathy. That sympathy will continue to be felt by the present Government, but it is impossible for Great Britain to act alone, and the pace at which the Concert of the Powers travels is always a slow one. What we shall do is to use all our influence, without separating from the Concert, to ensure that the reforms which have now been agreed upon with regard to Macedonia are made effective, and should they fail, we shall do our utmost to induce the other Powers to agree on whatever steps may be necessary for further improvement.

[Yours sincerely,]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 4.]

⁽²⁾ [This refers to an interview with Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria, recorded by Sir George Buchanan on 16 December, 1905, of which the chief point was that the Prince considered Lord Lansdowne indifferent on the subject of Macedonia though admitting he had not read the latest Blue Book.]

No. 82. Ed. Add.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/14.

(No. 50.)

Sir,

Sophia, D. July 7, 1906.

R. July 16, 1906.

In the course of a private conversation which I had with General Petroff to-day, His Excellency told me that he had instructed the Bulgarian Diplomatic Agents to express to the Governments, to which they were accredited, the hope that Macedonia would not altogether be forgotten in the negotiations now proceeding between the Powers on the subject of Crete.

In supporting the identic Declaration presented by Austria-Hungary and Russia in November last, the Powers, His Excellency observed, had invited Bulgaria to cooperate with them in restoring order in Macedonia; and by the correctness of its attitude the Bulgarian Government had shown its readiness to second their efforts in this direction.

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It was, however, confronted by the fact that, though much had been promised, little had actually been accomplished in the way of effective reforms; and, under these circumstances, it would be failing in its duty were it to refrain from warning the Powers of the feeling of despair that would be created in Macedonia if Crete, with its existing autonomous régime, were alone to be endowed with fresh privileges. It was not that he in the least grudged the Cretans a further instalment of reforms or even their union to Greece, but that he strongly felt that something ought to be done for Macedonia at the same time; as otherwise the population would lose all confidence in the promises of Europe and once more take the law into their own hands. Quite apart, moreover, from anything which the Powers might decide to do for Crete it would have been his duty to call their attention to the pressing needs of Macedonia.

I replied that he was, in my opinion, treading on rather dangerous ground in mixing up these two questions; that the Cretan Question could not possibly have any real or direct interest for Bulgaria, and that to speak of a general insurrection in Macedonia as the possible outcome of its solution was to use language that was open to misconstruction.

As General Petroff continued to urge the necessity of further reforms in Macedonia, I reminded him that it was only after months of negotiation and after a Naval Demonstration that the Financial Commission proposed by His Majesty's late Government had been established, and that until that Commission had had time to work, it was unreasonable to expect His Majesty's present Government to put forward fresh proposals which had no chance of being accepted. If, I added, Prince Ferdinand was dissatisfied with the support which he received from His Majesty's Government, His Royal Highness might perhaps persuade the Cabinets of Berlin and Vienna, with whom he was now on such excellent terms, to take the initiative in proposing the reforms which he thought necessary.

His Excellency laughed and said that I must not imagine that the improvement which had taken place in the Prince's personal relations with the German and Austrian Courts had made any change in his political sympathies.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 83. Ed. Add.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/15.

(No. 87.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Sophia, D. December 2, 1906.

R. December 17, 1906.

I had the honour of being received by Prince Ferdinand yesterday in an Audience of two hours' duration, devoted almost entirely to a discussion of the present political outlook.

After referring to the changes recently effected in the Ministry and to the favourable impression which they had produced, His Royal Highness proceeded to say that there was one subject which was causing him grave preoccupation—namely, the negotiations now proceeding for an Anglo-Russian Understanding. Russia, Prince Ferdinand remarked, had long realized that it had been a great mistake on her part ever to have called the Principality into existence, and she had persistently endeavoured to stunt its growth. The Bulgarian element in Macedonia had consequently become an object of suspicion in her eyes, and she had, on more than one occasion, struck an indirect blow at its development by encouraging the Greek and Servian propagandas. In a recent conversation with a member of the Bulgarian Agency at Constantinople, the Russian Civil Agent, M. Demeric, had made it quite clear that Russia was still pursuing her old selfish policy and would never tolerate anything in the shape of an autonomous régime in Macedonia. The outcome of an understanding between Russia and Great Britain would, His Royal Highness maintained, inevitably lead His Majesty's Government to disinterest themselves in the Macedonian Question and to leave Bulgaria to her fate. Russia, it was true, was enfeebled for the moment, but the day was bound to come when she would once more turn her eyes southwards. It was, therefore, surprising to him that the Western Powers did not realize that it was to their interest that Bulgaria should be strong enough, when that day came, to ward off the danger from the north. This was the policy, which Sir William White had advocated with such success at the time of the Eastern Rumanian Crisis; but it was, he feared, no longer in fashion. On the contrary it seemed more probable, in view of the great influence of which the King of Greece disposed, that an Anglo-Russian *Entente* would favour Hellenic rather than Bulgarian aspirations. As regarded Austria-Hungary, to whom the idea of Macedonian autonomy was as distasteful as to Russia, He was also placed in a position of no small difficulty. For the Emperor Francis Joseph he had the most sincere affection and even reverence, and for the new Minister for Foreign Affairs he had a strong personal regard; but he did not

believe that Baron Aehrenthal would ever reverse the traditional policy of his Government, which His Royal Highness regarded with the most profound mistrust. Count Goluchowski had consistently opposed any understanding between the Balkan States, and his action with regard to the Customs Union Treaty of last year had been prompted by the desire to keep Serbia and Bulgaria apart. It was the same thing in Macedonia, where racial antagonism was encouraged by Austrian Agents, among whom the late Civil Agent, Herr von Müller, had been one of the worst offenders. He could not, therefore, place reliance on the friendly assurances which he received from Vienna nor evince any confidence in Austrian statesmen.

In the course of my reply I told Prince Ferdinand that I took an entirely different view to His Royal Highness of the possible consequences of an Anglo-Russian understanding, and reminded him of the explanations, which I had given him, with your sanction, at Varna, as reported in my despatch No. 45 Confidential of the 2nd of June last. His Royal Highness, I said, was quite mistaken in supposing that, because they desired to remove all possible causes of conflict or misunderstanding with Russia in Asia, His Majesty's Government would on that account no longer take an interest in the affairs of Macedonia. Their interest was as great as ever, and their policy had not changed. It had for its object the establishment of order and good government in Macedonia, without any thought of favouring the aspirations of one nationality at the expense of another. No British Government would, in my opinion, ever embark on war on account of Macedonia, and it, therefore, stood to reason that the better our relations became with Russia, the more likely was that Empire to co-operate cordially with us in the cause of Macedonian Reform. With regard to the suspicions which His Royal Highness had expressed of Austria-Hungarian policy, I would venture to submit, for his consideration, the advice once tendered by Shakespeare—"Assume a virtue, if you have it not." It was possible, I thought, to be on one's guard against a person or a State without openly proclaiming one's mistrust; and His Royal Highness would be more likely to predispose Austria in his favour, were he to refrain from disclosing his real sentiments towards her.

While expressing a qualified approval of my remarks on the subject of our relations with Russia, His Royal Highness observed that his feelings with regard to Austria were often too strong to keep under control and that he could never forget the manner in which he had been treated, after his recognition, by the Austrian Court and Government.

Referring next to his relations with the Balkan States, Prince Ferdinand condemned in the strongest terms the excesses committed during the anti-Greek movement last summer, which had, he said, left a stain on Bulgaria's good name. It had once, he said, been his dream to arrive at a friendly understanding with Greece and, on more than one occasion during the earlier years of his reign, negotiations had been opened between the Cabinets of Athens and Sofia. Personal as well as political considerations however, had forced him to abandon the idea; while, in the case of Serbia, with whom a political understanding had also been talked of, a divergence of interests barred the way. With Roumania, on the contrary, an arrangement of some kind might, he believed, be arrived at, and means might even be found to satisfy her demand for territorial compensation. The present precarious state of the King's health, however, rendered negotiations of such moment somewhat difficult at present; and His Royal Highness gave me to understand that he would prefer greatly to treat with King Charles than with His Majesty's successor.

Though Prince Ferdinand's language to myself was not quite so explicit, I have reason to believe, from information which reaches me from a private and reliable source, that His Royal Highness desires to secure an agreement, under which the two Governments would engage to support each other in all matters, in which they are respectively interested in Macedonia, and to exercise, when occasion required it, a united pressure at Constantinople. His Royal Highness even told my informant that he would be prepared, in certain eventualities, to cede the Silistria-Baltchik Line; while he explained that, if he had hitherto adopted an attitude of reserve towards Roumania, it was because he had seen a copy of the Austro-Roumanian Military Convention of 1900, which guaranteed to that Kingdom the Bulgarian Quadrilateral, as the price of her co-operation in an eventual war.

In continuation of his review of the situation, Prince Ferdinand informed me that his immediate object at present was to efface the impression, which General Petroff had unfortunately left on the mind of the Porte, that Bulgaria cherished aggressive designs against Turkey. He had already at Marienbad done his best to convince Nedjib Melhame Pasha of the groundlessness of such a suspicion; and later in the autumn Nedjib, with whom he had travelled for an hour in the Orient Express, had suggested that His Royal Highness could give a convincing proof of his pacific intentions by at once proceeding to Constantinople, where every honour awaited him. Prince Ferdinand had replied that this was impossible so long as the Ottoman Government continued to terrorize the Bulgarian element in Macedonia by the agency of Greek Bands

and to deport numbers of them to Asia Minor on the flimsiest of charges. Were they to abandon this hostile attitude and to take the Reforms seriously in hand, His Royal Highness would then be in a position to pay a visit to the Sultan without shocking the feelings of his subjects. Prince Ferdinand admitted that, since the Speeches delivered by M. Petkoff and M. Stancioff in the Sobranie, there were signs of a better disposition at Constantinople and he did not even despair of arriving at an understanding, provided that it was not wrecked by the intrigues of one or other of the Foreign Ambassadors. While he would thus endeavour to advance the cause of Reform by establishing good relations with Turkey, His Royal Highness trusted that the Great Powers would extend the mandate of the Financial Commission to the administration of Justice and would gradually establish an effective European control over all the branches of the Government. The edifice must, however, be crowned by the appointment of a Christian Governor General, chosen from some neutral State, as until Hilmi Pasha retired from the scene it was useless, Prince Ferdinand insisted, to count on a serious application of the Reforms.

His Royal Highness, in conclusion, begged that I would consider all that he had said, as spoken in the strictest confidence.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.] **

II. Servian Activities.

(A.)—*Extract from Annual Report for Servia for the Year 1906.*

(Enclosure in Despatch from Mr. J. B. Whitehead, No. 26 of April 11, 1907.)

F.O. 371/928.

To what extent the Servian bands which have recently been so active in the Vilayet of Kossovo are financed and organized from Servia it is difficult to say. There is no doubt that a few Servian officers, retired or in the reserve, are actually on the spot, and occasionally come to Belgrade to confer with the Servian Macedonian Committee, but it is probable that the determining voice as regards most enterprises rests with the local leaders. On the 3rd November the Skupshtina voted the usual annual credit of 300,000 fr. (£12,000) "for assistance to indigent persons in Old Servia and Macedonia," but the Prime Minister carefully explained that a strict account would be kept of its expenditure, which would be shown confidentially to any members of the House who desired to examine it. There is, however, besides this, a very suspicious item in the Estimates for the Ministry for Foreign Affairs (the same sum being claimed for 1907 as was granted in 1906), amounting to no less than 1,375,000 fr. (£55,000), which is practically secret service money, and is described as being for "extraordinary expenses and proper vindication of national interests." The following information in regard to the financing and composition of the Servian Macedonian Committee has been obtained from a private source connected with that organization, and is believed to be fairly reliable. The sums available for the Servian propaganda in Macedonia during the year 1906 were as follows: 300,000 fr. voted by the Skupshtina, 300,000 fr. granted from the Secret Service Fund, 800,000 fr. collected from wealthy Servians, and 40,000 fr. collected from Macedonians settled in Belgrade and engaged in commerce and other callings there. Among the wealthy Servians who contributed, the following are named: Nicola Spassitch, merchant (20,000 fr.); Luka Chelovitch, a Herzegovinian by origin, President of a Banking Association and merchant (10,000 fr.); Georgevitch Brothers, merchants (8,000 fr.); George Weiffert, brewer (6,000 fr.); Lyuba Chrismanovitch, partner in the Export Bank, (5,000 fr.); Godjevatv Brothers, manufacturers (4,000 fr.), &c. Of the total of 720,000 fr. (£28,800) it is asserted that not more than 30,000 fr. to 40,000 fr. were actually applied to the purposes for which the money was given, the remainder having been wasted or otherwise

disposed of. The composition of the Macedonian Committee for 1906 was as follows: President, M. Lyuba Davidovitch, Minister of Education in the Independent Radical Stoyanovitch Cabinet; M. Lyuba Yovanovitch, Professor of the University, and actual Vice-President of the Skupshtina; M. Karitch, a chemist of Vranja; M. S. Statitchanine, a Professor at Vranja; M. Lyuba Nenadovitch, Captain of Artillery, and a cousin of the King; M. Dragicha Giuritch, an employé in the Statistical Bureau of the Ministry for Finance; Captain Voulovitch, of Vranja; and Major Peshitch, until recently Aide-de-camp to Prince George. The Committee for 1907 is somewhat differently constituted, Captain Nenadovitch and M. Giuritch having been excluded for excessive embezzlement. The new President is Nicholas Stefanovitch, a General in the Reserve, and other new members are Colonel Jovan Popovitch (a pensioned officer), Major Trifkovitch, Lieutenant Ponta Petrovitch, and M. Golub Yovitch (a rich Belgrade citizen). Of last year's Committee only M. Yovanovitch (Vice-President of the Skupshtina) and the Vranja members remain. In consequence of the irregularities that have been detected, all the private contributors have refused to give anything this year, and the resources of the organization are limited to the 300,000 fr. voted by the Skupshtina. The new Committee is to audit last year's accounts in order to discover what became of the money.

No. 84. Ed. Add.

*** [[Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.*

F.O. 371/328.

(No. 11.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. February 15, 1907.

R. February 22, 1907.

In accordance with the authorization contained in your Despatch No. 5 of the 21st Ultimo, I availed myself of an opportunity on the 9th Instant to speak to Monsieur Pashitch on the subject of the activity of Servian bands in certain parts of Macedonia, and expressed the hope of His Majesty's Government that the Servian Government would do their utmost to prevent the formation of these bands, and especially to discourage attacks upon Bulgarian villages.

His Excellency replied by giving me a somewhat lengthy historical retrospect of all that had brought about the present situation, stating that ever since the establishment of the Exarchate and the introduction of the Slav liturgy, the Bulgarians had gradually encroached upon what had formerly been the unquestioned Servian Sphere, and in fact the cradle of the Servian State. In this they have been supported by Russia, whose motives were of a political order, and also by Turkey, who at that time thought that Bulgarian rayas would be more docile than the Serbs.

The Sphere which Servia has always claimed includes practically the whole of the Turkish Vilayet of Kossovo, and especially its three principal points, viz., Uskub, Prishtina, and Prizrend, all of which have at one time been the residence of Servian Rulers. Some rectifications of the present boundaries of the Vilayet could be admitted, and some concessions made to Bulgaria on its Eastern border, but the town of Istib should belong to the Servian Sphere.

His Excellency went on to say that for some twenty years past the question of a division of Spheres of influence in Macedonia had been periodically discussed between the Servian and Bulgarian Governments. Occasionally the latter had been quite willing to admit the Servian claim; at others, when the general political situation was more favourable to them, they contested it. The Servian Government, on the other hand, were so sure of the justice of their claim, that they would be quite willing to abide by the decision of a scientific ethnographical Commission, which should draw the frontier line between Serbs and Bulgars according to language and traditions. The frontier would of course not be a very definite one, as the two nationalities, being closely akin, "mixed on meeting as liquids do," but an impartial Commission would be able to draw a line which would be practically equitable, and such a line Servia would not hesitate to accept.

Returning to the immediate question, i.e., the acts of violence committed by the Servian bands, I pointed out that it was a well-known fact that the bands were subsidized from Servia, and were in part led by Servian officers, so that the conclusion was almost unavoidable that the Servian Government were in a position to exercise sufficient influence over them to prevent the acts in question.

Monsieur Iashitch replied that this was not the case. The sums voted by the Skupshтина for Macedonian refugees were applied under Government supervision only to the relief of the needy; and although he was aware that the bands were financed from Serbia, this was done by private subscriptions and could not be prevented. It should be remembered that, for instance, nearly one-half of the population of Belgrade, and especially the wealthier tradesmen, were of Old Servian origin, and that their interest in the fate of their native land was very keen. As regards the officers, those who went to Macedonia were either on leave of absence or in the reserve, and had merely obtained permission to leave the Kingdom of Serbia. According to the Service regulations they were dismissed from the Servian Army if they could be proved to have taken part in the insurrection in Macedonia. It was however almost out of the question to draw a cordon of troops along the frontier to prevent the passage of bands, because if Serbia did so the Turks would immediately think it necessary to reinforce their troops on the frontier, who would then devastate the Servian villages in Turkish territory.

His Excellency further stated that he had himself attempted, some time ago, to come to an agreement with the Bulgarian Government with a view to putting a stop to the conflict between Serbs and Bulgars in Macedonia, but that he had failed, Bulgaria considering it preferable not to interfere with the local struggle. In this he had most reluctantly been obliged to acquiesce, but it was obvious that in these circumstances nothing effectual could be done to prevent the Macedonian Serbs from resenting Bulgarian encroachments by force.

In conclusion I repeated to His Excellency that it was the earnest desire of His Majesty's Government that these regrettable conflicts between the kindred Christian races in Macedonia, which involved so much avoidable suffering and bloodshed, should be put a stop to, and expressed the hope that the Servian Government would still be able to bring about this result.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.] **

(B.)—*Extract from Annual Report for Serbia for the Year 1907.*

(Enclosure in Despatch from Mr. J. B. Whitehead, No. 20 of April 2, 1908.)

F.O. 11713/11713/08/39.

19. The Belgrade Macedonian Committee was dissolved in August 1907, ostensibly as a result of the resignation of the President, General Nikola Stephanovitch, but more probably in consequence of a total lack of funds, and its dissolution involved that of the Sub-Committee at Vranja. Up to the end of the year it had not been reconstituted, and it is only fair to suppose that, in deference to the representations of the Powers, the Servian Government opposed its reconstruction. This supposition is to some extent borne out by a recent report that the Macedonians living in Serbia intended to re-establish the Committee quite independently of the Government, and without accepting any subsidy or other assistance from them.

20. Towards the end of the year public sentiment in Serbia was further exasperated by the destruction by fire of the Servian Secondary School at Uskub, which was at once attributed to Bulgarian incendiaries. It was afterwards stated that the fire had been accidental, but this version gained little credence in Belgrade.

21. To sum up the whole situation as regards the relations between Serbia and Bulgaria, it is clear that they can never be cordial and stable until the competition between the two nationalities for an eventual acquisition of the Slav countries still under Turkish rule comes to an end. M. Pashitch was in favour of co-operating with Bulgaria for common aims, and of deferring the discussion of the rights of the two nations to the expected inheritance until it should actually fall due, but his intentions were frustrated by the uncompromising claim of the Bulgarians to the whole of the territory awarded to them by the Treaty of San Stefano.

III. Greek Activities.

(A.)—*Extract from Annual Report for Greece for the Year 1906.*

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir F. Elliot, No. 9 of January 21, 1907.)

(a.)

F.O. 371/264.

The year 1906 may be characterized as one of increased activity of Greek bands against Bulgarians, and those of the Kutso-Vlachs who call themselves Roumanians. The consequence has been that unusual pressure has been put upon the Greek Government to exert their authority to prevent the formation of bands in their own territory, and their influence to restrain their operations beyond it; and that the Government, becoming conscious that the atrocities committed in the name of Hellenism were losing for Greece not only the official but the popular sympathies of Europe, ended by yielding to the instances of the Powers, but declared through their mouthpiece in the Chamber, the Prime Minister, that they would not answer for the consequences if the cessation of Greek was followed by a revival of Bulgarian activity. The year closed in comparative quiet.

(b.) RELATIONS WITH BULGARIA. V.

The natural animosity between Greeks and Bulgarians has been intensified during the year. Not only have Greek and Bulgarian bands been engaged in open hostilities in Macedonia, but the Greeks in Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia have been exposed to ill-treatment, probably not unprovoked, probably also exaggerated in the Greek reports of it, but which has led to an exodus of them to the number of over 5,000, according to Greek, or 1,500, according to Bulgarian official statements. It is certain that there are a considerable number of them here, who are a drain upon official and private charity and an embarrassment to the Government. Facilities are offered them to become Greek subjects, but they seem to be slow to avail themselves of them, and some of them are returning to their homes. The accounts published here of the burning of Anhiolo and the sacking of Greek churches and schools at Philippopolis, Stanimaka, and elsewhere, have added to the normal hatred of the Bulgarians a feeling of bitterness which it will take a long time to dispel.

(B.)—*Extract from Annual Report for Greece for the Year 1907.*

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir F. Elliot, No. 21 of February 19, 1908.)

F.O. 6413/6413/08/19.

I.—FOREIGN RELATIONS.

(A.) *Turkey.*

(a.) *Macedonian Bands.*

1. At the close of 1906 the Greek Government had undertaken to do all they could to prevent the formation on their own territory of bands for Macedonia, and to use their influence to prevent their congeners on the spot from moving. Their endeavours, aided by an exceptionally severe winter, produced an effect, and the year 1907 opened with an unusually low proportion of Greek crime, as shown in the Returns. During the month of January "both the Greek and the Bulgarian revolutionary organizations" were "temporarily quiescent." Nevertheless, it was

not long before the preparations for a spring campaign began to be made in Thessaly.

2. During February recruits for the bands began to arrive at Volo, and officers in active employment (notably Lieutenant Maroudas, sub-chief of police at Volo, whose recall was eventually obtained) bestirred themselves in the organization of bands. The number of deaths from violence in Macedonia continued to be low, but the outrages committed by Greek bands were out of all proportion to the rest. They included the massacre of fifteen Bulgarian charcoal-burners at Djasako and Boudahia, in the Kaza of Katerina. On the other hand, the Bulgarians killed six men at Zernovo.

3. In March dissensions arose between the Committees at Athens and the band leaders in Macedonia, partly on the question of money, partly on that of leadership, the bands preferring civilian leaders of experience and local knowledge, the Committees appointing officers of the Greek army, who were incompetent and out of touch with their men. Public discussion of the dispute was soon suppressed, but the dispute itself continues to this day.

4. At the beginning of April, in consequence of the Reports of the Civil Agents in Macedonia of local preparations for revival of the activity of the Greek bands, the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments made renewed representations with a view to the exercise of a restraining influence from Athens. The operations of the bands during the month were few, and Greek crime was almost entirely confined to the latter part of it. In Thessaly the authorities appeared to be actively discouraging the bands.

5. But before the end of May bands were again being formed in Thessaly, and the authorities were no longer checking the movement. News of operations by Bulgarian bands (not entirely corroborated) contributed to that result. The Returns for the month show marked increase of activity by both parties.

6. In the month of June both sides were at work, the Bulgarians especially. Particular attention was called by the Greek Government to the attack on Greek refugees from Kavakli and Karyae by Bulgarian troops on their crossing the frontier. In Thessaly the organization of bands continued.

7. The Returns of crime for July show much the same proportions, but the activity of the Turkish troops was greater, 80 Bulgarians, 51 Greeks, and 74 Servians being killed. Partly perhaps from this cause, partly from the publication of the Blue and Yellow Books, showing the effect of the action of the bands upon European public opinion, activity in Thessaly diminished. Towards the end of July the Ottoman Government made strong representations at Athens, which were supported by the other Powers, calling upon the Greek Government to prevent the formation of bands in Thessaly, and to recall officers serving with the bands in Macedonia. Orders were given in consequence, and a list was published of fifteen officers who were to be called to account for their proceedings during leave of absence. Of these, eight have been sent before a Court of Inquiry, whose decision is not yet known. At the same time, an incursion into Macedonia by Bulgarian soldiers, reported here to be 140 in number and to be led by officers, took place. Although much exaggerated, there was a foundation of fact in the report, which has been made the most of on the Greek side.

8. Outrages by Bulgarian bands were reported with increasing frequency during August, whereas in Thessaly matters were quiescent, and in Macedonia Greek political crime decreased by 50 per cent. But the energies of the Turkish troops were directed chiefly against the Bulgarians, and left the Greek bands comparatively unmolested.

9. Crime in September remained on the same scale, but there were two bad cases committed by Greeks—eight workmen murdered near Salonica and five wood-cutters at Kadush. Roumanian bands, a purely factitious creation, continued the activity begun in August. On the 30th September was made the communication

of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments to the Balkan States respecting the interpretation of Article 3 of the programme of Mürzsteg, and the warning as to the possible consequences of neglect of the wishes of Europe, which was apparently only addressed to the Greeks.

10. The answer of the Greek Government, which was delivered on the 23rd October, was that they would do everything possible to contribute to the pacification of Macedonia, and that they entirely concurred as to the expediency of preserving the *status quo*, provided that what was meant was the *status quo ante* the first operations of Bulgarian bands in Macedonia. The Returns for the month showed an enormous increase of Bulgarian crime, including the outrages at Negovan and Rakovo. A consequence of this was that the preparations in Thessaly which had been suspended were resumed, and that the homeward flow of bandsmen was stopped.

11. In November Bulgarian crime, though still considerable, had diminished. Greek crime remained about the same in amount, but included the particularly bad case of the massacre of twenty-five Bulgarian workmen near Isvor, in the Chalcidic Peninsula, a crime as regards the preparation of which suspicion rests upon M. Sahtouris, the Greek Consul at Serres, an officer believed by His Majesty's Consuls to have been implicated in other crimes of the same nature.

12. Unfortunately M. Sahtouris is by no means the only Greek Consul upon whom a similar suspicion rests. Charges of a like nature were brought against M. Mavroudis at Cavalla, and he was recalled by the Greek Government in deference to the representations of His Majesty's Government, with the declaration, however, that this was not to be taken as an admission that the charges were well founded. M. Coromilas, the Consul-General at Salonica, was withdrawn at the request of the Ottoman Government, which had satisfied itself of his intimate connection with the organization of the bands. He was soon afterwards appointed to the newly-created post of Greek Minister-Resident at Washington.

13. It appears from the Reports of His Majesty's Consuls in Macedonia that, except during one period of the summer, the Ottoman troops pursued the Greek bands with very much less energy than they did the Bulgarians. The Greeks, on the other hand, complain that it is they who are unfairly treated. They argue that the Turks ought not to persecute their bands at all, since they are really their allies against the common enemy, a point of view which is no doubt to a certain extent accepted in Turkey, even if the inaction of individual detachments may be explained by judicious expenditure on the part of the Greek Committees.

IV. Rumanian Activities.

Extract from Annual Report for Greece for the Year 1906.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir F. Elliot, No. 9 of January 21, 1907.)

F.O. 371/264.

The issue in 1905 of the Sultan's Iradé recognizing the existence of a "Roumanian" community, with the right to have churches and schools of its own, was taken by the Greeks in general, and by the Œcumenical Patriarchate in particular, as a serious blow to the Hellenic cause. The Kutso-Vlachs of Macedonia had been regarded as among the firmest pillars of Hellenism, and the defection of such of them as were perverted by the Roumanian propaganda was a matter of serious importance. The Patriarchate declared the Iradé illegal, as an infraction of the rights of the Œcumenical Church, and declined to allow the performance of divine service in the Roumanian language. The Greek Macedonian bands turned their attention to the dissident Vlachs, and employed their usual methods of terrorism to compel their

fideliſy. The Roumanian Government required the Greek Government to uſe its influence to put a ſtop to theſe proceedings, and on its diſclaiming any reſponſibility for them, diplomatic relations between the two countries were broken off, the Roumanian Government denounced the Commercial Convention between them, withdrew the privileges accorded to certain ſcholastic and other bodies in Roumania, and entered upon a courſe of expulſion, not only of Greek journaliſts, but of reſpectable Greek merchants long eſtabliſhed in Roumania.

The breach has been maintained throughout 1906, the Prime Miniſter declaring in one of the laſt ſittings of the Greek Chamber, amid general approval, that ſince it was not of their making, it was not for the Greek Government to take the initiative in healing it.

Although righteouſly indignant at the conduct of the Macedonian bands, the Roumanian Government is aſking too much in requiring the Greek Government to admit reſponſibility for them. And although the conceſſion of the right to perform divine ſervice in the Roumanian language—which, by the way, it is contended on the Greek ſide that few of the Kutso-Vlachs underſtand—appears to us to be a ſmall matter, there is ſomething to be ſaid, both from the eccleſiaſtical and from the “Hellenic” point of view, for the action of the Patriarchate in reſuſing it. On the other hand, the official perſecution of individual Greeks in Roumania ſeems unjuſtifiable, and the legality of the withdrawal of privileges granted by ſolemn compact at leaſt doubtful. Whatever the merits of the caſe, the attitude of the Greek Government and public has been dignified and correct.

No. 85. Ed. Add.

** [[*Sir C. Greene to Sir Edward Grey.*

F.O. 371/117.

(No. 42.) Confidential.

Sir,

Bucharest, D. May 16, 1906.

R. May 21, 1906.

I met M. Take Jonesco in the train a few days ago, and in the courſe of a journey from Sinaia we ſpoke of the outlook in the Balkans. I venture to put down a few notes of what M. Jonesco ſaid in the hope that they may be of ſome intereſt to you, as, apart from his poſition in the preſent adminiſtration, he is generally held to be one of the moſt intelligent obſervers in Roumania, and he is alſo well known to many Members of Parliament and other public men in our own Country.

M. Jonesco ſaid that the political clouds were certainly gathering, but that it was hard to ſay whether the ſtorm would burſt juſt yet. The Turks were arming againſt the Bulgarians and the latter were following ſuit, but the armaments were ſtill incomplete, and meantime nothing ſerious was likely to occur. One ſign of the times which was rather favourable was the abſence ſo far of activity on the part of the bands: as a rule the latter began their operations in advance, and were thrown out, like ſkirmiſhers, to prepare the way for a more ſerious aſſault. It was poſſible, therefore, that the ſhock might be poſtpoſed, but it was ſure to come. Bulgaria would no doubt gain the initial ſucceſſes, as ſhe could mobilize her forces much more rapidly than Turkey, but the latter was ſtill formidable, and it was probable that if the two parties were left to fight it out, the Turks would be the conquerors. But the Bulgarians counted on the ſympathy and indeed on the intervention of ſome at any rate of the Great Powers, and made their plans accordingly. As regarded the Great Powers, they calculated on the good-will of England and France, and perhaps even of Italy, but in the caſe of Ruſſia, Auſtria and Germany, the future was uncertain. Ruſſia and Auſtria had been nurſing the Balkan problem for ſome time paſt, partly becauſe they feared the reſult of any change in the *ſtatus quo*, and partly becauſe they had ſo much to think of at home that they wiſhed to be relieved of anxiety outside their own borders. But now that Ruſſia had abandoned her career of adventure in the Far Eaſt—probably for ever—ſhe would certainly ſome day fall back upon her earlier intereſts in the nearer Orient, and ſeek to recover ſomething of her loſt preſtige; while Auſtria could not remain indifferent to a poſſible change in the preſent ſituation on the Adriatic. Germany had alſo a growing ſtake in the fortunes of the Turkiſh Empire, and had lately given a hint of her intereſt in the problem. The outlook was, therefore, complicated by many conſiderations which it was impoſſible at preſent to forecast. If, however, war

occurred, and the result were to be unfavourable to Turkey, M. Jonesco's opinion was that that Country would be much stronger, if she were once relieved of her European possessions, with the exception of Constantinople, than she was to-day. As things were, she was obliged to keep up a considerable army and spend a great deal of money on portions of her Empire which brought her little or nothing and only exposed her to perpetual danger. If on the other hand she were to let these provinces go, and only retain Constantinople with, say, a screen of 50 miles around it for defensive purposes, she could concentrate her energies on her Asiatic possessions, and become again an important factor in the world. Any one who has seen Constantinople must admit that it could never be held by a small Power; it must always remain, as it was to-day, the appanage of a Power with a past; and, if some day thrown open to the access of all the world, and freed from the present restrictions of navigation, it might become the *entrepôt* of a great commerce. As regarded Macedonia, after certain portions had been sliced off and handed to suitable neighbours, the remainder could be treated on the same lines as Crete, and internationalized in divisions under Swiss or Dutch or any neutral control, and with troops of occupation on the same basis. It would not be a permanent settlement of the problem, but it would be a step towards a wider solution. Again, a new State might be founded under a European Prince to consist of a portion of Albania united with a portion of Macedonia, while Greece might be given a part of Epirus. As regarded a possible ultimate Confederation of all the Balkan States, he believed that, if it were to be allowed to come into existence, it would prosper and be able to maintain peace within its own borders.

As to Roumania, the question which really concerned her was what she should do in the event of a collision between Bulgaria and Turkey. Her assistance, and even her neutrality, were of vital importance to Bulgaria, and she must be prepared to give either the one or other in return for a suitable consideration. If Roumania were to come to the armed assistance of Bulgaria it was more than probable that her help would come too late. The army could not be very quickly mobilized, and in the meantime the decisive actions would have been fought. Moreover the inadequacy of the railway communications in Bulgaria and in Turkey would make it almost impossible to bring up the troops in time. There remained then the alternative of neutrality, which was what he himself considered the best course, and the more so as Roumania would thereby be less likely to incur the hostility of her bigger neighbours who commanded her territory on the North and East. Roumania had always to remember that, with the Russians on one side and the Hungarians on the other, she had racial elements to deal with with which she could never blend, and she must not forget those German influences to which she owed her Sovereign and her success. As to the *quid pro quo*, provided Roumania made a moderate demand, he felt sure she could secure it from Bulgaria. All he would ask for would be a slight but very desirable rectification of the frontier: not the old quadrilateral including Silistria-Schumla-Varna, but a line to run from opposite Olténitza on the Danube to Baltjik on the Black Sea. This would enable Roumania to protect her present approaches to Constantza, and at the same time provide her with one of the safest anchorages on the Black Sea coast. This, M. Jonesco felt sure, Bulgaria would concede. Roumania did not wish for a "big Bulgaria," but, if Bulgaria was determined to put her future to the touch, it would not do for Roumania to be blind to her opportunities.

I have, &c.

CONYNGHAM GREENE.]] **

CHAPTER XXXIV.

SERVIA AND THE GREAT POWERS (1903--7).

I. SUSPENSION AND RESUMPTION OF DIPLOMATIC
RELATIONS WITH SERVIA (1903--6).

No. 86.

Sir G. Bonham to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 148.

(No. 62.)

Belgrade, D. April 7, 1903.

My Lord,

R. April 13, 1903.

With reference to my telegram No. 7 of this day's date, I have the honour to transmit translations of two Royal proclamations published officially to-day.⁽¹⁾

By the first His Majesty suspends temporarily the Constitution of April 6 1901 (o.s.), giving his reasons for so doing.

By the second His Majesty restores in all its force and vigour the same Constitution of 1901.

In the official Gazette containing the second Proclamation are also published three Royal decrees, as follows.

Decree 1. The appointment of life Senators in accordance with the terms of paragraph 70 of the Constitution. The names of 24 life members appointed by the King are given.

Decree 2. Appointing the President and Vice-President of the Senate, viz.

General Velimarkovitch formerly regent of the Kingdom.

Stojan Velkovitch.

Decree 3. Appointing the President and Vice-President of the Conseil d'Etat, viz.,

General Bogitchevitch and Vladimir Markovitch.

I may here mention that Takovo alluded to in the first Proclamation is the place where Milosch Obrenovitch raised his standard in 1815 and is therefore always associated with the idea of Servian independence.

I have, &c.

G. F. BONHAM.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 87.

Sir G. Bonham to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 148.

(No. 75.)

Belgrade, D. May 3, 1903.

My Lord,

R. May 11, 1903.

I have the honour to report that M. Denitch the Minister for Foreign Affairs who is about to absent himself from Belgrade for a few days on family affairs called on me to-day saying that he did not wish to leave without having first had some conversation with me on the turn which events have recently taken at Salonica.

He first recounted to me the various outrages which had taken place stating positively, on the authority of his Consul, that they were the work of emissaries from Bulgaria. He described the loss of property, a large part of which was foreign as being very serious, and asked whether, seeing that the Porte was unable to maintain order, the time had not arrived for the Great Powers to intervene⁽¹⁾

(¹) [A long paragraph here refers to the state of affairs in Old Servia.]

In the course of a long conversation His Excellency remarked that the Servian cause had been prejudiced by the attitude of moderation which they had always maintained, whereas the Bulgarians had taken advantage of the circumstance to push their own interests and obtain an ascendancy in districts which a few years ago were undoubtedly Servian. He mentioned that it was mainly owing to the exertions of the Metropolitan of Belgrade that the Bulgarian Church under the Exarchate had been founded to enable the Macedonian Slavs to have religious Services celebrated in their own language instead of in Greek, and that the Bulgarians had made use of it for carrying on a political propaganda. He denied with some warmth my suggestion that in the neighbourhood of Salonica the Greek was the prevailing element of the population saying the Jewish were the most numerous but that after them other nationalities were more equally divided.

At the close of our interview I told him that I would report what he had said to Your Lordship—that the recent occurrences at Salonica would probably diminish the sympathy felt in some quarters for Bulgarian grievances and that doubtless the Turkish Authorities would receive assistance from Foreign Ships of war in the event of its being required for the protection of foreign interests.

As regards the question of old Serbia if it should be eventually shown that the Porte is unable to carry out the reforms, the matter might call for some decision on the part of the Powers, but in the first instance it appeared to rest with Austria and Russia.

I have, &c.

G. F. BONHAM.

No. 88.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir G. Bonham.

F.O. Servia 147.

(No. 18.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 18, 1903.

I have received your despatch No. 75 of the 3rd instant⁽¹⁾ reporting a conversation which you had had with the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs in regard to the recent disturbances at Salonica and the position of Servia as affected by the present situation in the Balkan Peninsula.

With reference to your remark to M. Denitch that the authorities at Salonica would doubtless receive assistance from foreign ships of war in the event of such assistance being required for the protection of foreign interests, I have to observe that, if such intervention by foreign ships of war were to take place, it would not by any means of necessity assume the form of assisting the Turkish authorities.

As regards M. Denitch's request to be informed of the course which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnme]nt propose to adopt at the present juncture, it appears to me undesirable that you should allow yourself to be drawn into an announcement of the intentions of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnme]nt. It will be sufficient for you to inform M. Denitch, if he should recur to the subject, that the policy of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnme]nt is no doubt well known to the Gov[ernme]nt of Servia, and that we earnestly trust that they may find it possible to maintain a quiescent attitude, which will certainly gain for them the goodwill of all concerned.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

(¹) [v. immediately preceding document.]

[ED. NOTE.—On the 11th June the King Alexander Obrenović and Queen Draga of Servia fell victims to a military conspiracy among officers in the army. Peter Karageorgević, of the rival royal Servian House, was chosen King by the Servian Skupshtina on the 15th June.]

No. 89.

Sir F. Plunkett to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Vienna, June 11, 1903.

F.O. Servia 157.

D. 3.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 84.) Confidential.

R. 6.30 P.M.

With ref[erence] to my immediately preceding telegram, I have just had a conversation with Under Sec[retary] of State for Foreign Affairs. It appears that so far dreadful deed in Belgrade has been accepted with calm by the Servian population. Austro-Hungarian Foreign Office believe that murders were result of a Servian military conspiracy and have no connection with Macedonian movement. As yet there seems no reason to anticipate that the change at Belgrade need cause any complications between Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments, and I gather that selection of Karageorgevitch as King is not viewed with disfavour here.

Beyond the horror naturally caused by sudden outrage event has so far created comparatively little excitement here.

To-day being great holiday the Exchange is closed and no newspapers appear, so it is difficult as yet to judge what the effect here may be when more details get known.

No. 90.

Sir F. Plunkett to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Vienna, June 12, 1903.

F.O. Servia 157.

D. 7.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 38.) Confidential.

R. 9.0 P.M.

My telegram No. 34 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

Count Goluchowski when I saw him this afternoon seemed confident that the sad event at Belgrade would not lead to any difference of opinion between the Russian and Austro-Hungarian Governments, as both were disposed to let Servians themselves nominate whoever they wish as their future King. I gathered, however, very distinctly that the selection of K(arageorgevitch) as King would be favourably viewed here. His Excellency said that his last accounts from Belgrade showed everything to be absolutely quiet there, but we must wait for meeting of Skuptchina on Monday next before it will be prudent to express any definite opinion.

(¹) [r. immediately preceding document.]

No. 91.

Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Petersburgh, June 12, 1903.

F.O. Servia 157.

D. 8.16 P.M.

Tel. (No. 40.)

R. 10 P.M.

I have just seen Count Lamsdorff who was under painful impression of the tragic events at Belgrade. He awaits further details before pronouncing opinion as to probable outcome but said that Russia had no intention of intervening in internal affairs of Servia and would no doubt recognize any legally constituted Gov[ernmen]t if other Powers did so.

No. 92.

Sir J. Kennedy to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Roumania 155.

(No. 38.)

Bucharest, D. June 12, 1903.

My Lord,

R. June 16, 1903.

The news received here yesterday afternoon of the barbarous assassinations committed at Belgrade have been received here almost with indifference.

No sympathy with the King or Queen of Servia has ever been felt in Roumania. The feeling expressed here is that the dynasty of the Obrenovitch is extinct, and will be replaced by the Karageorgevitch dynasty, which will suit the views of the Governments of Austria-Hungary and of Russia.

No political complications are anticipated, now that Prince Mirko of Montenegro has not been invited to occupy the Throne of Servia.

I have, &c.

J. G. KENNEDY.

No. 93.

Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

St. Petersburg, June 13, 1903.

F.O. Servia 157.

D. 1:40.

Tel. (No. 42.)

R. 2:30.

My Tel[egram] No. 40 yesterday.⁽¹⁾

I saw Austrian Ambassador last night after he had conferred with Count Lamsdorff. He told me that both Governments are taking a sober view of the situation in Servia and prepared to recognise any legally constituted authority capable of maintaining order. Meanwhile provisional Government seems to them equal to the occasion.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 126, No. 91.]

No. 94.

Mr. Elliot to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 131.)

Sophia, D. June 13, 1903.

My Lord,

R. June 19, 1903.

This morning I asked General Petroff, the Bulgarian Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs, what was his view of the situation created by the butchery at Belgrade. He replied that, setting aside all considerations of the atrocity of the crime, the matter was one which did not concern the Bulgarian Government at all. They had taken no military measures in consequence of it, and they would take none, so long as order was preserved, as appeared to be the case at present. Of course, if there was anything in the nature of a counter-revolution or civil war, steps would be taken to secure the tranquillity of the Bulgarian border.

As regards the question of the successor of the unfortunate King Alexander, it was a matter of comparative indifference to the Bulgarian Government, who had no desire to interfere in their neighbours' affairs, who only wanted to remain on good terms with them, and who hoped to attain that object, by whomsoever the latter elected to be ruled. If he had had to give them advice, it would have been to choose a Sovereign from among the Royal Families of Europe.

I have, &c.

F. ELLIOT.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir G. Bonham.

F.O. Servia 157.

Foreign Office, June 15, 1903.

Tel. (No. 4.)

D. 11.15 P.M.

Your Tel[egram] No. 18 (of June 13).

H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t have considered whether, in order to mark their reprobation of the atrocious occurrences which have lately disgraced the Servian Capital, H[is] M[ajesty's] Representative should not be withdrawn from Belgrade.

They have however come to the conclusion that you should for the present, remain at your post in order to watch and report events and for the protection of British subjects and interests. Your intercourse with the authorities will be strictly limited to what is necessary for these purposes.

You will be careful to do nothing which could be construed as an official recognition of the provisional Gov[ernmen]t, whose freedom from complicity in the acts of Friday night has not as yet been established, or as pledging H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnmen]t to recognise the authority which may be set up in succession to the late Dynasty.

We are informed that Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t do not consider it necessary to withdraw their Representative from Belgrade, and that he has been instructed to accept the provisional Government as the existing *de facto* authority for the transaction of any current business. It seems probable that other Gov[ernmen]ts will follow the same course.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Mr. Buchanan.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 149 A.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 15, 1903.

The German Amb[assado]r called at the F[oreign] O[ffice] to-day and inf[orme]d Mr. Hardinge that, as the Austrian and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts were leaving their Ministers at Belgrade, the German Government had decided to do so also.

Count Metternich said that he understood that Austria and Russia would recognise Prince Peter Karageorgevitch if he were elected King, and he thought that Germany would, in that case, adopt a similar course.

His Excellency added that the German Emperor had decided not to declare any Court Mourning for the late King and Queen of Servia.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir G. Bonham.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 24.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 15, 1903.

M. Mijatovitch called at the F[oreign] O[ffice] to-day, unofficially, and informed Sir E. Barrington that the Servian Provisional Gov[ernmen]t had instructed him to announce that Prince Peter Karageorgevitch had been proclaimed King of Servia.

In answer to a question as to whether he had accepted the Throne, M. Mijatovitch replied that there was no doubt he would do so.

As regards himself, M. Mijatovitch said that he knew that he had no position here, and he therefore quite understood that the Secretary of State could not receive him.

He added that there was no question of his continuing as Minister under a new Gov[ernmen]t, and that, if asked to do so, he should certainly refuse.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSLOWNE].

No. 98.

Sir F. Bertie to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

Rome, June 17, 1903.

F.O. Servia 157.

D. 1.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 40.)

R. 3.50 P.M.

Your telegram to His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade No. 4 of June 15.⁽¹⁾

Instructions to Italian Minister are that he is only to deal with current matters and that any requisite communications (with?) Servian Authorities are to be by *notes verbales* and to be impersonal, and not to employ any recognition of existing Government.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 128, No. 95.]

No. 99.

Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

St. Petersburg, June 17, 1903.

F.O. Servia 157.

D. 8.15 P.M.

Telegraphic.

R. 9 P.M.

Servian succession.

Count Lamsdorff informed me to-day that the Emperor had received a telegram from Prince Peter Karageorgevitch, announcing that, having been chosen by an unanimous Resolution, passed in proper form by the Servian Skuptchina, to fill the vacant throne, he had accepted offer of Crown, and assumed the style of Peter of Servia. He said that Emperor had already replied, in a telegram addressed to the King of Servia, acknowledging the announcement of his having accepted the Crown from the legally constituted Representative Assembly, and recognizing him as the Sovereign of Servia.

Count Lamsdorff considers that first act of new Sovereign must necessarily be to mark his reprobation of the abominable and indefensible tragedy of the 12th [*sic*] June by bringing the regicides to condign punishment.

His Excellency said that he had ignored the existence of Provisional Government, and had told the Servian Minister, who has now left, that he could not reply to, or take notice of any communication made to him in the name of a so-called Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs of whose existence he had no official knowledge, but now that a properly constituted authority was in existence, Russian Government could not hesitate to acknowledge it. Attitude of Russian Government, in the presence of situation created by acts of the regicides, will shortly be fully explained in an official communiqué which Count Lamsdorff is drawing up.

No. 100.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 139.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 17, 1903.

The Italian Amb[assado]r asked me to-day for information as to the intention of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t with regard to the new Servian Gov[ernmen]t.

I gave H[is] E[xc]ellency the same reply as I had given earlier in the day to the Austro-Hung[aria]n Minister (see my Desp[atch] No. 57 of to-day's date to Sir F. Plunkett).⁽¹⁾

M. Pansa told me that the Italian Gov[ernmen]t intended for the present to employ their representative at Belgrade only for the transaction of "les affaires courantes," and would not accredit him officially to the new Gov[ernmen]t.

I told H[is] E[xc]ellency that I did not think that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would be in any hurry to recognise the new Gov[ernmen]t.

[I am, &c.]

LANSDOWNE.]

⁽¹⁾ [v. next document.]

No. 101.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Plunkett.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 57.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 17, 1903.

The Austro-Hungarian Minister asked me to-day for information as to the action which H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t were likely to take in regard to the recognition of the new régime in Servia.

I told C[oun]t Mensdorff that we had considered whether it w[oul]d not be desirable to show our abhorrence of the events which had lately discredited the Servian capital by advising the King to withdraw H[is] M[ajesty's] Repres[entati]ve from Belgrade. We had however come to the conclusion that it would be desirable to allow Sir George Bonham to remain for the present at his post in order to supply us with information and to watch over British interests. He would not however be accredited to or have official relations with the new Gov[ernmen]t. I added that in my opinion we should probably be in no hurry to accord official recognition to them.

C[oun]t Mensdorff told me that the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t attached so much importance to the establishment of some stable form of Gov[ernmen]t in Servia that they would not delay their recognition of the new régime. The new King belonged to a dynasty which had reigned in the country before, and, now that the Obrenovitch dynasty had become extinct it was as well to recognize the Karageorgevitches.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 102.

Sir E. Monson to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 320.)

My Lord,

*Paris, D. June 17, 1903.**R. June 18, 1903.*

M. Delcassé said to me this afternoon that he believed that M. Cambon had already let Your Lordship know the nature of the instructions sent to the French Minister at Belgrade, and that he understood that they were practically the same as those sent by you to Sir G. Bonham.

I repeated to him the sense of the latter as communicated to me in Your Lordship's telegram No. 98, and His Excellency said that he had confined himself to these instructions, and had sent nothing further to Belgrade.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

EDMUND MONSON.

⁽¹⁾ [The rest of this despatch refers to the murder and is omitted as it does not add to previous information.]

No. 103.

Sir G. Bonham to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 105.)

Belgrade, D. June 17, 1903.

My Lord,

R. June 22, 1903.

I have the honour to transmit herewith inclosed the translation of a telegram addressed by the Emperor of Russia to Prince Karageorgevitch conveying his congratulations on his being elected to the Servian Throne.⁽¹⁾

A similar telegram, of which a translation is inclosed, from the Prince of Montenegro has also been published.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

G. F. BONHAM.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, both are undated.]

No. 104.

Statement in House of Commons, June 17, 1903.

(*Parl. Deb. 4th ser., Vol. 123, pp. 1171-2.*)

Mr. Gibson Bowles: I beg also to ask the First Lord of the Treasury, can he now state what attitude His Majesty's Government propose to adopt towards the persons now assuming to act as the Government of Servia; and whether any communications are proceeding with Foreign Powers with a view to common or concerted action.

The Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury (Mr. A. J. Balfour, Manchester, E.): As I stated on Monday, diplomatic relations between this country and Servia came to an end with the death of King Alexander and have not been renewed. His Majesty's Government have considered whether they should mark their reprobation of the crime which has disgraced the Servian capital by withdrawing His Majesty's representative at Belgrade. It has, however, been thought that, for the present, Sir G[eorge] Bonham should remain at his post, in order that he may watch and report upon events and that he may take whatever steps are necessary to protect British interests. He will not be accredited to the new Government nor will any steps be taken to accord official recognition to it until we are in possession of fuller information as to the circumstances under which it has come into power. We understand that the Powers in regard to whose attitude His Majesty's Government have received information are instructing their representatives to accept the provisional Government as the *de facto* authority with which current business is to be transacted.

No. 105.

*Sir C. Scott to the Marquess of Lansdowne**St. Petersburg, June 18. 1903.*

F.O. Servia 157.

D. 3.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 44.)

R. 5.45 P.M.

An order for twenty-four [days ?] (group omitted) court mourning for late King and Queen of Servia will be issued here to-morrow after previous intimation of intention to other courts.

(Confidential.)

Count Lamsdorff said yesterday in connexion with immediate recognition of new king that the risk of seeing a Republic proclaimed could not be incurred.

No. 106.

Sir F. Plunkett to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 166.) Confidential.

Vienna, D. June 18, 1903.

My Lord,

R. June 22, 1903.

From all I have been able to learn at the time, and since, I have little doubt that the terrible catastrophe at Belgrade was not only not foreseen by the Austro-Hungarian Government, but that, odd as it may seem, the contingency of King Alexander's possible death had not been provided for in the arrangement come to between Austria-Hungary and Russia in regard to the Balkans.

Therefore when the fatal news arrived it found the Austro-Hungarian Government entirely unprepared for any immediate action, and before it was possible for them to communicate with St. Petersburg, Belgrade had resumed its ordinary life, and not only forgiven, but apparently rejoiced in, the murderous extinction of its late Royal Family.

In the first moment the principal anxiety of this Government was lest the catastrophe at Belgrade might lead to internal difficulties in Servia, and therefore when they saw that all was quiet, they were only too glad to let things alone and abstain from any action which could give offence there, or possibly lay the seeds of a civil war in that country. Hence, no doubt, the decision proclaimed, perhaps with indiscreet bluntness, first in a leading article in the "*Fremden-Blatt*" and afterwards by the Austrian Prime Minister in the Reichsrath that the tragedy enacted on the night of the 10th instant, however disgraceful in itself, was an internal matter which primarily concerned the Servian people themselves. As by degrees further confirmation of the cynical and bestial manner in which the crime had been committed came to be known, a change came over both public and official opinion, and the necessity for taking some steps to show the disgust which every civilized being must feel at such a butchery became general.

Events, however, moved so quickly at Belgrade, and all the details of the plot had been apparently so carefully prepared beforehand for the selection of Prince Peter Karageorgevitch, that it was considered here undesirable to take any step to imperil the immediate selection of a candidate for the Throne to whom this Empire has no objection.

I have already forwarded to Your Lordship in my telegram No. 43 of yesterday the reply that The Emperor Francis Joseph made to the telegram which His Majesty had received from Prince Peter Karageorgevitch announcing his acceptance of the Throne of Servia.

Copies of these two telegrams as published in the official "Wiener Abend-Zeitung" of yesterday are herewith enclosed.

The bold and straightforward way in which The Emperor Francis Joseph, while assuring the new King of his good wishes for his prosperity, expresses the horror and disgust which the late crime has evoked in the civilized world, is entirely endorsed by public opinion in this Empire, and will, I have no doubt, meet with the approval of the Universe.

I have, &c.

F. R. PLUNKETT.

Enclosure in No. 106.

Extract from the "Wiener Abend Post" [sic] of June 17, 1903.

Sire! J'ai hâte d'apprendre à Votre Majesté mon avènement au trône de Serbie. Appelé par le vote unanime du sénat et de la skoupchétina je veux reprendre la tradition paternelle et j'espère apporter à mon pays la liberté et le bonheur. Je demande respectueusement à Votre Majesté d'avoir pour moi les sentiments sympathiques qu'Elle a eus pour mon père jusqu'à sa mort. Si Elle daigne me les accorder, l'accomplissement de mes nouveaux devoirs me deviendra plus facile, j'ai la ferme intention et la certitude de les mériter.

PIERRE.

A Sa Majesté le Roi Pierre, Genève.

Sensible à l'empressement que Votre Majesté a mis à Me faire part de Son avènement au trône de Serbie, je tiens à L'assurer sans retard de toute Ma sympathie et des vœux que je forme pour que Son règne soit long et heureux.

Puisse-t-Elle réussir dans la noble mission qui Lui est échue de rendre la paix, la tranquillité et l'estime à ce malheureux pays, si cruellement éprouvé par une série de tourmentes intérieures et de le relever de l'état de profonde déchéance dans laquelle l'a récemment précipité aux yeux du monde civilisé un crime inique et maudit entre tous.

En S'appliquant à cette tâche Votre Majesté peut compter sur Mon appui et Mon amitié et être convaincue qu'il Me tiendra toujours à cœur, non moins qu'à Elle-même, de maintenir et de resserrer les liens de bon voisinage qui unissent depuis longtemps nos deux pays.

FRANÇOIS JOSEPH.

No. 107.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir G. Bonham.

F.O. Servia 157.

Tel. (No. 6.)

Foreign Office, June 19, 1903.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] consider it desirable that you should leave Belgrade before the arrival of the new Sovereign, and the ceremonies which will no doubt take place on that occasion.

Mr. Thesiger leaves London to-morrow morning for the purpose of taking charge of the Legation. You should inform the provisional Gov[ernment] in an unofficial note that you are returning to England, and that you have received instructions to place Mr. Thesiger in charge of the Legation.

MINUTE.

The King entirely approves the withdrawal of Bonham from Belgrade before the arrival of the new King Peter.

E. B.

June 19, 1903.

No. 108.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir C. Scott.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 164.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 22, 1903.

The Russian Amb[assado]r called on me to-day and said that he had read the statement which I had made on Friday last in the House of Lords with regard to Servian affairs. He asked me whether I was able to give him any information as to the attitude of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t towards the new régime.

I replied that I did not think I could usefully amplify what I had said in the House of Lords. Public opinion in this country had been deeply moved by recent events at Belgrade and it was impossible for us at present to enter into official relations with the new Gov[ernmen]t. I said that I had observed that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t had indicated their expectation that the authors of these crimes would be adequately punished. It seemed to me that there would be some difficulty in doing this. There was an impression that some members at least of the new Gov[ernmen]t were concerned more or less directly in the murder of the King and Queen.

C[oun]t Benckendorff evidently did not disagree with me. I added that we should certainly be in no hurry to accredit a representative to the Servian Gov[ernmen]t.

[I am, &c.]

L[ANSDOWNE].

No. 109.

The Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. Servia 157.

Tel. (No. 105.)

Foreign Office, June 23, 1903.

Diplomatic relations suspended for the present between this country and Servia.

Sir G. Bonham has left and Vice Consul will take charge of the Legation during his absence from his post. There will be no Court mourning here.

Inform Court to which you are accredited.

No. 110.

Mr. Thesiger to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 116.)

My Lord,

*Belgrade, D. June 23, 1903.**R. June 27, 1903.*

I have the honour to report that only the Russian and Austrian Ministers, accompanied by the staffs of their respective Legations, will be present at the station on the occasion of the King's arrival.

The Ministers of France, Turkey, America and Holland left Belgrade to-day and the representatives of Germany, Italy, Belgium, Greece, Roumania and Bulgaria, although remaining in Belgrade, will take no part in the celebrations of the next three days. The question as to what action was to be taken by the Ministers of the various countries was only decided at the last moment. It was for some time uncertain whether M. Dumba, the Austrian minister, would go to the station in uniform or not, but the hand of the Austrian Government was forced by the action taken by the Russian minister, and, in order not to imperil their future influence in Servia, Austria has practically been obliged to follow the lead of Russia in this question, with the sole stipulation that the presentation of the Austrian minister to the King should not be made by the Foreign Minister or any other member of the provisional Government. The Russian minister, who has already acknowledged the existing Government will be

presented by the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs and will then present his Austrian colleague.

The line taken by the Russian Government will certainly increase their influence here. While condemning the atrocities committed on the night of the 10th-11th June and repudiating all idea of condoning a military revolution directed against the person of the Sovereign to whom the army had taken the oath of allegiance, Russia will not make the punishment of the murderers a primary condition of the continuance of their friendly relations with Servia, but will treat the matter as one falling within the internal administration of Servia, and so practically out of her jurisdiction, and will content herself with strongly recommending that a thorough and impartial investigation should be made into all the circumstances leading up to and following the tragedy of the 11th June and advising the production of all documents discovered in the palace or elsewhere, bearing on the subject.

The Russian Minister has taken up the position that, until both sides have been heard, no fair judgment can be pronounced and that on examination of the private papers found in the palace many extenuating circumstances may be brought to light.

That some such documents will be produced seems very probable, but in the event of an enquiry it is hard to see how impartial judges are to be procured.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

[ED. NOTE.—King Peter arrived at Belgrade at 10 A.M. on the 24th June.]

No. 111.

Sir N. O'Connor to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 157.

(No. 361.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Therapia, D. June 23, 1903.

R. June 29, 1903.

Upon my calling upon Monsieur Constans two days ago he expressed his keen satisfaction at the declaration made by Your Lordship in the House of Lords on the 19th instant in regard to the savage and brutal outrage which had been perpetrated at Belgrade. He said that Monsieur Delcassé informed him that he was instructing their Minister at Belgrade to confine his duties to protecting the interests of French citizens and he himself earnestly hoped that their Minister would be temporarily withdrawn. So far as he knew, however, no further steps had been taken and he was inclined to attribute the inaction and want of courage shown by his Government to their subserviency to Russia, but he hoped that the example shown by Your Lordship in this matter would not be lost on the other Powers.

The Sultan has, I understand, been considerably disturbed by a report in the Foreign Press that a *coup d'état* had been attempted at Yildiz. The result of enquiries which were immediately set on foot to discover the origin of the report resulted in showing that it had been spread by a certain Wessman or Weissman who styles himself agent for Russian affairs in the Balkan states and who is supposed to be a Russian secret agent, now at Belgrade, whence it was telegraphed abroad.

His Imperial Majesty regarded the rumour as an insidious attempt to take off public opinion from the Servian tragedy, and immediately issued orders that the Press which had been muzzled and forbidden to allude to the occurrences at Belgrade should be allowed to give all the details connected with the assassination of the King and Queen and their partizans. A copy of the notification appearing in the Turkish press is inclosed herewith.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

Enclosure in No. 111.

Extract from the "Levant Herald and Eastern Express" of June 23, 1903.

Commenting on the Serbian tragedy, the Turkish papers state:—

All civilised countries, all Governments, great and small, stigmatize the villains who enacted the odious tragedy in the Konak at Belgrade, and, according to the European Press, unanimously demand their exemplary punishment. In view of ensuring universal harmony the Almighty has endowed man with intelligence and conscience, and our conscience tells us that nothing is more sacred than human life. All men agree on this point, and the hardened criminals, whose act has shaken to its very foundations the harmony of civilization established on earth by the will of God, and who, by murdering the Serbian Royal couple, have committed a deed diametrically opposed to the laws of humanity, have shown themselves to be enemies of the civilised world. It is therefore the duty of the world at large and of the Governments responsible for the application of law to insist upon the punishment of the criminals. As soon as the news of the fearful tragedy of which Belgrade was the scene became known, all enlightened peoples and the entire Press demanded the punishment of the culprits and particularly the English Press who called upon all the Governments to make representations on the matter to that of Serbia. Our contemporaries quote the 'Daily Graphic,' the 'Standard,' and the Russian 'Government Messenger,' and state that the German, Austrian, French and Italian papers wrote in the same strain. They add that all Sovereigns were deeply affected by the drama, and that the Russian Emperor wept and instructed his Minister at Belgrade to demand the punishment of the murderers. The British and Rumanian Governments have recalled their representatives at Belgrade, stating that the continuance of diplomatic relations with the Serbian Cabinet is not possible so long as the regicides have not been given up to justice. The Tsar, in his reply to Karageorgevitch's telegram announcing his election to the Throne, states that he can only be recognised as King after the punishment of the murderers of his predecessor and his consort. The German Emperor exclaimed on hearing the news, 'Which is the Sovereign who would allow persons who do not recognize the Divine Right of King? to go unpunished.' The cursed people must receive exemplary punishment as otherwise the world's harmony would be endangered. The note alludes to the mourning at the Russian and Rumanian Courts and to the resignation by King Charles of the honorary Colonelcy of a Serbian Regiment, and concludes by reproducing Lord Lansdowne's speech.

No. 112.

Mr. Thesiger to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 149.

(No. 163.)

My Lord,

*Belgrade, D. October 8, 1903.**R. October 12. 1903.*

I have the honour to report that, as the Servian Government seemed to imagine that the resignation of the provisional ministry had restored the relations between England and Servia to the footing on which they stood prior to the revolution, I thought it advisable to inform them unofficially that this was not yet the case.

So long as the last ministry was in power all communications and circulars were addressed from the Servian Foreign Office to the British Legation and were unsigned but during the past few days I have received several circulars addressed to me personally as chargé d'affaires and signed by the Foreign Minister.

I called upon M. Boscovitch, one of the permanent secretaries, to-day and pointed out that, until England was represented here either by a minister or a chargé d'affaires, all communications should be addressed unofficially and I reminded him that, on the

few occasions when it had been necessary for me to communicate with the Foreign Office, it had always been in this manner, and also that I had never been present on any of the public occasions when the diplomatic body had been officially represented.

M. Boscovitch, who seemed considerably annoyed, replied that if I was not chargé d'affaires I could not claim to be treated as a diplomatist and could only be reckoned as a distinguished stranger resident at Belgrade.

My answer to this was that I held local rank of second secretary of legation and as chargé des archives I was empowered to carry on the current business of the legation and communicate unofficially with the Servian Foreign Office. I added that, as there seemed to be some misunderstanding on this point, I had called upon him personally in order to prevent the possibility of an occasion arising when my inability to recognize the Government officially might have a more public nature and, by provoking comment, make the situation on both sides more difficult.

I was impelled to take this course without waiting for instructions, by the fact that otherwise the new minister for Foreign Affairs would have called upon me officially in the course of a day or two, and I should have been obliged either to refuse to receive him or else to neglect to return his visit.

Trusting that my action may meet with Your Lordship's approval as being in the spirit of my instructions I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

The King considers Mr. Thesiger's position is a very difficult one!

E.R.

[ED. NOTE.—On 20th October, Lord Lansdowne wrote to Mr. Thesiger approving his language. Lord Lansdowne to Mr. Thesiger, No. 35, F.O. Servia 158.]

No. 113.

Mr. Thesiger to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 158.

(No. 3.)

Belgrade, D. January 13, 1904.

My Lord,

R. January 17, 1904.

I have the honour to report that the French Belgian and Roumanian ministers left Belgrade yesterday; the Turkish and Greek ministers however have received instructions to remain though their attitude to the Court is unchanged. . . .⁽¹⁾

The departure of the three ministers yesterday has created a very strong impression and the opposition press has not been backward in urging upon the Government the necessity of ceding to the opinion of Europe on the question of the officers, as otherwise the coming spring will find Servia isolated at the very moment when she will have most need of the good will of the powers. For this reason it is very desirable that the Legations here should do nothing to weaken the impression that they are unanimous in requiring the dismissal of the Conspirators from Court.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

I quite agree with Mr. Thesiger's very proper observation.

E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [The omitted passage deals in detail with the attitude of the Ministers to the Court.]

[ED. NOTE.—On the 3rd February Lord Lansdowne wrote to Mr. Thesiger that he concurred entirely in his observations, Lord Lansdowne to Mr. Thesiger, No. 4, Confidential, F.O. Servia 158.]

Mr. Thesiger to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 153.

(No. 87.) Confidential.

My Lord,

Belgrade, D. November 17, 1904.

R. November 21, 1904.

I have the honour to report that at the interview which I had this morning with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, the reasons for which I explained in my preceding despatch of to-day's date, M. Passitch touched on the relations between England and Servia. His Excellency declared that he quite understood and sympathised with the horror excited in England by the murder of the King and Queen and would not attempt any defence of the revolution but would only express the hope that the present tranquillity of the Country and the firm intention of the King and his Ministers to govern on strict constitutional lines would not be without influence on His Majesty's Government.

Servia clearly understood how important the friendship of England was for her both politically and commercially and was genuinely anxious for a restoration of friendly relations.

The Ministry at the present moment was occupied with the discussion of the renewal of all the Commercial treaties with other countries and he hoped England would be represented in Belgrade before any new Commercial treaties were signed, as it was part of Servia's policy to find new markets for her commerce in order to lessen her dependence on Austria.

Under present conditions any great increase of trade with England could hardly be hoped for, but with the development of railways in the interior with an outlet on the Adriatic the present value of the commercial relations between the two Countries might be enormously augmented.

It was in this respect His Excellency acknowledged that English influence would be very useful to them. The construction of a line between the Servian frontier and the Adriatic was of vital importance to Servia but it was opposed by Austria from selfish motives and also by Turkey who failed to recognize her own real interests. Without the support of a stronger Power Servia could hardly hope to overcome this opposition. Such a line, continued, as it undoubtedly would be, through Servia into Roumania would be the direct route for all the Commerce of the Balkans, and England with her sea carrying power could not fail to benefit even if the railway through Turkey were not, as might be the case, built with English Capital.

I abstained from making any comment on the above conversation which closed our interview, and M. Passitch after again reiterating the hope that His Majesty's Government would soon see fit to restore their former relations with Servia, promised to do his best to bring about a friendly settlement of the commercial case which had led to our meeting.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

Mr. Thesiger to the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 155.

(No. 57.)

My Lord,

Belgrade, D. November 29, 1905.

R. December 4, 1905.

With reference to Your Lordship's telegram No. 3 of the 25th instant and the copy of Sir Nicholas O'Connor's telegram of the same date, I have the honour to report

that I informed the Austrian and Russian Ministers that, while the warning addressed by their Governments to the Balkan States would be supported by His Majesty's Government both in Sofia and Athens, owing to the existing relations between England and Servia, no similar action would be taken by the British Legation in Belgrade.

In reply to a question from Baron Czikann, I answered that if the Servian Government were inclined to express any doubt as to the unity of the Powers in this matter he was at perfect liberty to inform them that England had supported the warning of the two Powers both at Sofia and Athens and that if she had not done so in Belgrade it was solely on account of the relations existing between the two Countries, and I added that if when he next saw the Minister for Foreign Affairs he could emphasize this point it would not be amiss.

The Note addressed to the Servian Government by Austria and Russia was sent in to-day and will be verbally supported by the French German and Italian Ministers to-morrow at the usual reception of the Minister for Foreign Affairs.

It is extremely unlikely that Servia at the present moment would be disposed to take any initiative as regards a more aggressive policy towards Turkey as the ill-success of the last-sent Servian bands and a want of funds have rather damped the enthusiasm of the supporters of a forward policy in Macedonia. Should however Bulgaria in spite of this warning take any such steps, the old feelings of jealousy and suspicion would be at once aroused here and probably lead to a renewal of activity on the part of the Committees.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

No. 116.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Thesiger.

F.O. 371/180.

Foreign Office, March 29, 1906.

Tel. (No. 2.)

D. 2.30 P.M.

Your Tel[egram] of today.

Renewal of relations.

What the Servian Gov[ernment] may do must be done on their own responsibility. You should be careful not to commit yourself in any way by the discussion of details, and keep strictly within the lines of our action here as explained in my Despatch No. 9.⁽¹⁾

(¹) [Not reproduced. The sense is given in Sir Edward Grey's statement in the House of Commons, quoted in the following document.]

No. 117.

Question asked in the House of Commons, April 11, 1906.

(*Parl. Deb. 4th Ser., Vol. 155, p. 1302.*)

Sir Gilbert Parker: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether the conditions under which this country would be ready to resume diplomatic relations with Servia have been specified in writing to a Servian agent; and, if so, what are those conditions.

The Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (Sir Edward Grey, Northumberland, Berwick): The question of the renewal of diplomatic relations between England and

Servia cannot be discussed between the two Governments so long as the regicide officers hold official positions and influence the Servian Government. In the event of these officers being withdrawn from their positions and of the King agreeing to send a representative to Belgrade, it would of course be understood that the officers in question would not be reinstated.

No. 118.

Mr. Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. April 18, 1906.

R. April 23, 1906.

I have the honour to report that after nearly a week's hesitating consideration the King yesterday evening definitely refused to sign the Ukase placing the conspirator officers on the retired list and accepted the consequent resignation of General Grouitch's Cabinet. His Majesty's decision appears to have been arrived at with a full knowledge of the opinion of the Country on this matter, as I am informed on good authority that he had previously summoned all the leaders of the different parties and asked them in turn whether, in the event of the Cabinet resigning, they would take office, and that he had received the same answer from all namely that unless the conspirator question was first settled it was impossible for them to do so.

That the matter was twice on the point of being settled in the opposite sense seems certain, and the fact that General Atanatzkovitch gave in his resignation of his own free will, in order that his name should not appear in the same list with those of the chief regicides, would appear to prove that he at least was at the time certain that the retirement of the others was only a question of two days more, and his opinion was certainly shared by persons who were in a position to know how matters were tending.

The failure of this latest attempt to solve the conspirator question is attributed here, and apparently not without justification, to the influence of Austria, whose present policy, tending as it does towards forcing on Servia the recognition of her entire dependence on Austria's goodwill, would not have been furthered by the presence of an English Minister here or by any lightening of the burden of difficulties under which the Country is struggling. It has not passed unnoticed that the two occasions during the past week on which the King's hesitation to get rid of the conspirators broadened into a definite refusal followed the return of M. Gentchitch, the leading civilian conspirator, from a two days' visit to Vienna and the arrival of M. Voukashin Petrovitch ex-Minister of finance, who has lived in Austria since the marriage of King Alexander, and who is credited here with being a close friend of Count Goluchowski's, with both of whom the King had various interviews. The Austrian papers and especially the *Neue Freie Presse* have certainly spared no efforts to encourage the conspirators and to prevent the King giving way, by dwelling on the danger to the dynasty if the regicide officers were removed.

So far they have succeeded but the Servian press is unanimous in condemning the attitude taken up by the King, and the political clubs appear determined to support the policy of General Grouitch's Cabinet.

The Skupshtina meets on Monday the 23rd instant and there seems no doubt that the Chamber will also approve the action of the outgoing Ministry and so the Crown and Parliament will be brought into direct opposition to each other.

The feeling in Belgrade is one of general bewilderment as to how the matter can possibly end. The possibility of a *Coup d'Etat* and the formation of a purely regicide

Cabinet is discussed but there is nothing in the King's previous record to show that he has the moral courage necessary for such a step the almost inevitable consequence of which would be a fresh revolution.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

No. 119.

Foreign Office to Vice-Consul Thesiger.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 16.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 30, 1906.

I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 22 of the 19th instant, in which you enquire what was the exact language of the Secretary of State in regard to Anglo-Servian relations, while replying in Parliament on April 11 to Mr. Gooch's question respecting Macedonia.

I am to state in reply that the words employed by Sir E. Grey on that occasion were as follows:—

“First let me say as to Serbia that I have nothing to add to the answer I gave this afternoon to the question asked by the Honourable Member for Gravesend” (Sir G. Parker).⁽¹⁾

The text of the answer to Sir G. Parker was communicated to you in Sir E. Grey's telegram of the 14th instant.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[ORST].

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra.* pp. 139-40, No. 117.]

No. 120.

Mr. Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, May 9, 1906.

F.O. 371/130.

D. 5·15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 9.)

R. 11·30 P.M.

With reference to my telegram of 26th April, German Minister supporting Austrian; advises retention of conspirators.

Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs is aware of danger of following this course: anxious to hasten relations with England.

Inform me, through the Italian Chargé d'Affaires, that four chief conspirators consent to resign if it would satisfy His Majesty's Government; in that case Servian Government would propose nomination of Servian Minister, Berlin, to London at once, if acceptable.

Solution urgent, if Austria not to succeed.

No. 121.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Thesiger.

F.O. 371/130.

Foreign Office, May 10, 1906.

Tel. (No. 5.)

D. 6·10 P.M.

(Conspirators.) Your telegram of 9th May.⁽¹⁾

We understand from your despatch No. 12 (of 22nd March) that really responsible regicides were six in number: if these were removed it might be possible to reopen the question.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey for the King.

F.O. 371/180.

Foreign Office, May 23, 1906.

Informal discussions, of a somewhat desultory nature, have taken place at intervals during the past six months on the conditions under which diplomatic relations with Servia could properly be renewed.

On December 5th 1905 Lord Lansdowne submitted a memorandum on the subject to the King.⁽¹⁾ His Majesty's Government were then of opinion that the moment had arrived when, subject to the adequate punishment of the leading conspirators, and to an undertaking on the part of the Servian Government that they should not again be employed, diplomatic relations should be resumed.

Mr. Thesiger, in his despatch No. 63 of December 28th, 1905, gave the following list of the principal conspirators :

1. Colonel Popovitch, Commanding the Division of the Danube.
2. Colonel Maschin, Acting Chief of the Staff.
3. Colonel Solarevitch, Head of the Military Academy.
4. General Atanatchkovitch, Head of the Bureau of Decorations.
5. Colonel Missitch, Military Tutor to the Crown Prince.
6. Colonel Lazarevitch, Commandant of the Belgrade Garrison.
7. Major Kostitch, Commandant of the Palace Guard.

Matters were delayed for some time by the disinclination of the King of Servia to sanction the retirement of the officers in question, and this attitude was encouraged by the Austro-Hungarian Representative at Belgrade, who being anxious to secure the exclusion of British influence in Servia intimated that, on the concession of certain commercial advantages to Austria, King Peter and the regicide officers would be officially received at Vienna.

On April 11th Sir E. Grey, with The King's approval, made the following reply to a question asked in Parliament. "The question of the renewal of diplomatic relations between England and Servia cannot be discussed between the two Governments so long as the regicide officers hold official positions and influence the Servian Government. In the event of these officers being withdrawn from their positions, and of the King agreeing to send a Representative to Belgrade, it would, of course, be understood that the officers in question would not be reinstated."⁽²⁾

On May 16th, Monsieur Milovanovitch, Servian Minister at Rome, called upon His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna, in order to communicate "an important and official" message from Monsieur Passitch, the President of the Council in Servia. The message was to the effect that the Servian Government were prepared to arrange that the following officers should resign their posts in the Army and at Court, receiving the pensions to which they were severally entitled :—

Colonel Popovitch, Colonel Maschin, Colonel Missitch, Colonel Lazarevitch and Major Kostitch.

General Atanatchkovitch had already resigned. There remained Colonel Solarevitch, and the Servian Government hoped he might be allowed to remain in the Army as he had had no connection with the actual assassination.

The Servian Government were anxious to know if, as soon as the resignations of the officers named had been brought about, His Majesty's Government would at once renew relations with Servia. They were desirous of getting the question settled before the elections in June, more especially as outside influences were at work to keep the matter open.

(1) [*v. infra*, *Ed. Note*, but this is the draft only and the wording, quoted in Sir Sidney Lee : *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 273, is different.]

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 139-40, No. 117.]

Sir E. Goschen, while consenting to transmit this message to His Majesty's Government, observed that he had reason to believe that, before assuming office, Monsieur Passitch had given a written promise to the King of Servia that he would place the conspirator question in the background. In these circumstances it was difficult to understand his conduct in making the present proposal to His Majesty's Government.

Monsieur Milovanovitch replied that he could not explain the motives of Monsieur Passitch, but that this was of no importance, since it was quite understood that diplomatic relations would not be reopened until the officers were definitely put upon the retired list.

Mr. Thesiger has been consulted by telegraph and has reported that he concurs in the view taken by the Servian Government as to the non-complicity of Colonel Solarevitch in the actual assassination.

If the officers mentioned by Sir E. Goschen are placed on the retired list, it may be said that all the principal regicides, six in number, have resigned. It would appear therefore that the question of the renewal of diplomatic relations may now be considered. If the officers resign it would be necessary, before a Minister is actually appointed, to obtain an assurance that they will not again be employed.

For political reasons it is desirable that advantage should be taken of the present opportunity to bring the matter to a satisfactory conclusion.

E. G.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The memorandum by Lord Lansdowne, printed below, is given here, as it is referred to by Sir Edward Grey. The King's reply is not recorded and it is not clear that he made one, but Sir Edward Grey, on entering office, expressed himself as follows :

Draft to Mr. Thesiger.

F.O. Servia 158.
(No. 40.) Confidential.
Sir,

Foreign Office, December 30, 1905.

With reference to your despatches Nos. 59 and 62 of the 12th and 19th instant I am directed by Secretary Sir E. Grey to transmit to you herewith for your confidential information copy of a memorandum by the Marquess of Lansdowne, on the question of the resumption of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Servia.

I am to inform you that Sir E. Grey concurs in the views expressed by Lord Lansdowne on this subject.

[I am, &c.]

Enclosure.

Memorandum by the Marquess of Lansdowne.

F.O. Servia 158.

Foreign Office, December 5, 1905.

It would, in my opinion, be advantageous that His Majesty's Government should resume diplomatic relations with Servia as soon as circumstances permit. From Mr. Thesiger's despatch No. 55 of November 15th it appears that a desire is now shown at Belgrade to deal with the officers implicated in the events of June 1903 in such a manner as to render it possible for the King to send a representative to that capital.

The Servian Minister at Rome used similar language in speaking to Sir E. Egerton towards the end of November. An overture in the same direction was made a few days ago to Sir Eric Barrington by Mr. Mijatovich, lately Servian Minister at this Court, and the Italian Ambassador spoke in the same sense to me.

I told the Italian Ambassador that in my view it would be difficult for His Majesty's Government to stipulate that certain individuals should be dealt with in a specific manner, and to undertake that, when they had been so dealt with, diplomatic relations would thereupon be resumed. Awkward questions might arise as to the extent to which the Servian Government had fulfilled its promise. A guilty officer might be dismissed from his employment one day and given another post the next. It seemed to me that if we were officially interrogated upon the subject, it would be sufficient to reply that, as soon as His Majesty's Government were satisfied that adequate notice had been taken by the Servian Government of the conduct of the

regicide officers, the King would consider the propriety of naming a representative, but it would be entirely for His Majesty to decide whether the punishment inflicted had been adequate or not. I gather from a statement made by Sir E. Goschen that one of the guilty officers has quite lately been appointed tutor to the Crown Prince—a selection which throws some doubt upon the sincerity of the Servian Government.

L.]

No. 123.

H.M. King Edward VII to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

*Buckingham Palace, May 24, 1906.**Dictated.—E.R.*

The King has received Sir Edward Grey's letter, with his enclosure regarding the subject of renewing diplomatic relations with Servia.

The King is perfectly ready to agree that a British Representative should be sent to Belgrade if Sir Edward Grey can secure a sufficient assurance that the five regicide officers have not only permanently resigned, and are pensioned, but that an undertaking is given that they will never be again employed.

The King has no great confidence in Servian Statesmen, and it would be very awkward if the Regicides were recalled as it might necessitate the withdrawal of our Minister.

The King would be glad to know if Sir Edward Grey has thought of anybody who might be suitable as our Minister at Belgrade.

EDWARD R. & I.

MINUTE.

We can now telegraph in this sense; it should be I think to Sir E. Goschen, who was chosen as the channel of communication.

E. G.

No. 124.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. Servia 371/130.

Foreign Office, May 25, 1906.

Tel. (No. 12.) Confidential.

D. 2.45 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 8.

You should inform the Servian Minister that as soon as the five officers mentioned in his communication have resigned and an undertaking been given that they and Colonel [*sic*] Atanatchkovitch will be never again employed H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will be ready to send a British Representative to Belgrade and to receive a Servian Representative in London.

It is advisable, in order to avoid ambiguity, that you should make this communication in writing, and you should mention verbally to the Servian Minister that, in the event of these conditions being now complied with and diplomatic relations renewed between the two countries, the re-employment of any of these six officers by the Servian Gov[ernment] would entail the withdrawal of H[is] M[ajesty's] Minister from Belgrade.

No. 125.

*Mr. Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.**Belgrade, May 30, 1906.*

F.O. 371/130.

D. 9.30 A.M.

Tel. (No. 12.)

R. 1.0 P.M.

King signed acceptance of resignation of five officers last night and their resignation was published in the Gazette of this morning.

No. 126.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 44.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 31, 1906.

The Austrian Ambassador told me yesterday that he had heard a report to the effect that the Austrian Government had been encouraging the Servian Government to retain the regicides in office, and that the Emperor of Austria had even gone so far as to say that he would be willing to receive King Peter and all the regicides in his train.

Count Mensdorff said that Count Goluchowsky considered it almost absurd to take any notice of such a report. But as he had heard of it, he thought it well to deny that anything of the kind had taken place.

I said it was true that there had been such a report. I thought something of the kind had appeared in the Press. But as I could not believe that the Emperor of Austria used any such language I had not mentioned it to the Ambassador.

I am, &c.

E. G[REY].

No. 127.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 63.)

Sir,

*Vienna, D. June 1, 1906.**R. June 5, 1906.*

I have the honour to forward herewith a copy of the Note, referred to in my telegram No. 11 of to-day, which I have received from the Servian Minister here, engaging, on behalf of the Servian Government, that the officers who took part in the conspiracy of 1903 and were placed on the retired list by Royal Decree on the 29th ultimo, shall never again be employed in the service of the State.

I have also the honour to enclose a copy of a previous communication from the Servian Minister, being a copy of a telegram from his Government, stating that the officers in question had been retired and pensioned and directing him to request me to ask whether the appointment of Monsieur Militchevitch as Servian Minister in London would be agreeable to His Majesty's Government.

As this telegram contained no mention of any engagement that the officers would not be readmitted to the Government service, I told Monsieur Vouitch that in order to avoid misunderstanding in the future it would be better if he addressed me an official Note stating that the officers had been retired, and containing the formal declaration of the Servian Government with respect to their non-employment which had been asked for by His Majesty's Government.

Monsieur Vouitch at once telegraphed to his Government and in due course brought me a Note which concluded by stating that the officers would not again be allowed to "serve in the Army."

I pointed out to Monsieur Vouitch that in my Note to Monsieur Milovanovitch I had used the words "will never again be employed under the Government" and that I thought it would be better that in his Note he should use a similar form, as, although I was sure that such would not be the case, the declaration left it entirely open to the Servian Government to employ the officers at Court or in any other official capacity.

Monsieur Vouitch expressed his agreement with my view of the case and again telegraphed to his Government with the result that he to-day brought me the inclosed Note which he hoped would be entirely satisfactory to His Majesty's Government.

I promised him that I would telegraph its substance and forward a copy of it by messenger to-day.

He also begged me to be good enough to urge you to telegraph whether the appointment of Monsieur Militchevitch would be agreeable, as his Government was exceedingly anxious to have the whole affair settled before the Elections which are to take place towards the middle of this month.

A copy of my Note to Monsieur Milovanovitch is also enclosed.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

Enclosure 1 in No. 127.

M. Vuić to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 371/130.

Votre Excellence,

Vienne, le 18 (31) Mai, 1906.

En réponse à la lettre de Votre Excellence adressée dernièrement à M. le Docteur Milovanovitch, Ministre de Serbie à Rome, et autorisée par mon Gouvernement, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire la communication suivante :

Sur le désir du Gouvernement Royal Britannique exprimé dans la susdite lettre de Votre Excellence, le Gouvernement Royal de Serbie déclare, que les officiers de l'armée serbe : MM. les Colonels Alexandre Machine et Damyan Popovitch, les lieutenants-colonels Pierre Michitch et Loukas Lazarevitch et le major Ljoubomir Kostitch ayant pris part à la conspiration de l'année 1903 et mis en retraite par l'Oukase Royal en date du 16 (29) mai, année courante, ainsi que le Général Jovan Atanatzkovitch (antérieurement mis en retraite) ne seront jamais repris au service de l'Etat. (De telle manière que, par leurs positions, ils ne soient jamais mis en relations avec les représentants royaux [*sic*] britanniques en Serbie.)

Veillez, &c.

(Sgnd.) DR. M. VOUITCH.

Enclosure 2 in No. 127.

*Communication télégraphique de la part du Gouvernement Royal de Serbie
(d'hier soir).*

(Communicated by M. Vuić to Sir E. Goschen.)

Legation de Serbie, Vienna, 1 Juin, 1906.

Les colonels de l'armée Serbe Alexandre Machine et Damyan Popovitch ainsi que les Lieutenants-Colonels Pierre Michitch, Loukas Lazarevitch et le major Ljoubomir Kostitch ont été mis hier, sur leur propre demande à la retraite avec les mêmes appointements comme pendant le service actif, conformément à la loi des employés civils.

En faisant cette communication à Son Excellence M. l'Ambassadeur d'Angleterre, priez Son Excellence pour l'entremise obligeante afin que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique accepterait M. le Docteur Michel G. Militchevitch, actuel Ministre de Serbie à Berlin, comme Ministre de Serbie auprès de la Cour Royale d'Angleterre.

Enclosure 3 in No. 127.

Sir E. Goschen to M. Miloradović.

M. le Ministre,

Vienna, May 26, 1906.

You were good enough to communicate to me recently a message from Monsieur Passitch to the effect that the Servian Government were prepared to arrange that the following officers should resign their posts in the Army and at Court, namely.

Colonel Damian Popovitch—commanding the Division of the Danube,

Colonel Machine—Chief of the Staff.

Colonel Peter Missitch—Professor at the Military School and commanding a regiment of Infantry.

Colonel Lazarevitch—commanding a regiment of Infantry, and

Major Kostitch—commanding a cavalry regiment.

You added at the same time that General Atanatzkovitch had already resigned.

His Excellency asked whether in case the above-mentioned officers sent in their resignations and were placed on the retired list, His Majesty's Government would send a Minister to Belgrade and receive a Servian Representative in London.

I beg to inform you that I did not fail to communicate this message at once to His Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

I have to-day received a reply from Sir E. Grey directing me to beg you to inform Monsieur Passitch that, as soon as the five officers have resigned and a formal undertaking has been given by the Servian Government that neither the five above-mentioned officers nor Gen[era]l Atanatzkovitch will ever again be employed under the Government, His Majesty's Government will be ready to send a British Representative to Belgrade and to receive a Servian Representative in London.

I have, &c.

(Sgnd.) W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 128.

*Question asked in the House of Commons, June 28, 1906.**(Parl. Deb., 4th Ser., Vol. 159. p. 1133.)*

Mr. Bottomley: I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs whether, at the time of resuming diplomatic relations with Servia, he was aware that several of the regicides had just been pensioned, with an increase of pay, for very special services rendered to the State, and that others were still occupying important posts at the Servian Court; and whether it was by accident or design that the date chosen for the announcement of the resumption of diplomatic relations was the anniversary of the murder of the late King and Queen.

Sir Edward Grey: His Majesty's Government made the resumption of diplomatic relations conditional upon the retirement of the principal regicides from posts held by them under the Servian Government, so that their future positions would not bring them into relations with British representatives in Servia. This condition has been

complied with, and His Majesty's Government are not concerned with other matters. I was not aware of the fact stated at the end of the Question.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The Netherlands was the last State represented at Belgrade during the previous reign to renew diplomatic relations. This was done on the 19th November, 1906, when the Netherlands Minister Resident at Bucharest "presented his credentials in the same capacity to the King of Servia." F.O. 371/130, No. 67, Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey of November 27, 1906, R. December 3, 1906.]

No. 129.

Question asked in the House of Commons, August 2, 1906.

(*Parl. Deb. 4th Ser., Vol. 162, p. 1352.*)

Mr. Bottomley (Hackney, S.): I beg to ask the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs what precautions have been taken, and what guarantees have been obtained, to enable the British Minister at Belgrade to avoid coming into contact with regicides; how the British Minister will be able to carry out his duties efficiently if he avoids all relations with regicides; and whether he will lay upon the Table of the House the correspondence relating to the renewal of diplomatic relations between Great Britain and Servia.

Sir Edward Grey: His Majesty's Government have received from the Servian Government assurances, which they consider satisfactory, that His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade shall not be brought into contact with regicides. It does not seem necessary to lay any Papers.

II. THE SERVIAN CUSTOMS WAR WITH AUSTRIA-HUNGARY, 1906-7.

No. 130.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 42.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. April 14, 1906.

R. April 17, 1906.

I have the honour to report that Count Goluchowski informed me the other day that things were not going well in Servia and that the Servian Government seemed bent on doing all they could to incur the displeasure of Austria and cause the latter Power to break off the negotiations for a Commercial Treaty. I asked His Excellency to what particular proceedings on the part of Servia he alluded. He replied that they were displeasing the Austrian Government in many ways, but that what he had particularly in his mind was the way they were behaving with regard to the purchase of cannons. The Austrian Government did not demand the whole of the contract, but, in view of the fact that the guns manufactured in Austria were every whit as good, and as a matter of fact cheaper, than those of Krupp, they demanded their fair share of the contract. The Servian Government were now shilly-shallying about the matter and continually putting off coming to a decision, but he intended to show them, as he had shown them before, that Austria was not to be trifled with in this manner, in fact he gave me to understand that it was a case of "No contract for guns, no Commercial Treaty."

This statement of Count Goluchowski would seem to lend colour to the reports that the Government have addressed a communication to that of Serbia demanding that before the 3rd reading of the Commercial Treaty the Servian Government should bind itself, and in such a way that all succeeding Governments should be similarly bound, in all cases of public tenders, to treat Austro-Hungarian manufactures with consideration and give them the preference when their quality and price correspond with those of other nations.

It is said that the Servian Government have declared themselves ready to bear in mind the demand of the Austro-Hungarian Government for the preference of Austro-Hungarian manufactures, but absolutely refuse to bind themselves to do so, or to give any written undertaking to that effect.

As General Grouitch's Cabinet will certainly not take the responsibility of another Customs War with Austria it is anticipated that it will shortly resign.

I hear also that the Radical Party of Serbia have determined to refuse to come to any decision with regard to the Gun contracts until the question of the conspirators is settled.

In this connection, I have the honour to enclose a translation⁽¹⁾ by Mr. Seymour of an Article in this morning's issue of the "Neue Freie Presse" which deals with the attitude of His Majesty's Government with regard to the conspirators.

The Article points out that the stability and tranquillity of Serbia being indispensable to peace in the Balkans, are matters of far greater importance to the world in general than the question of the conspirators, and that, while the attitude of His Majesty's Government on this question is, from a moral point of view, worthy of all respect, it cannot be said to be anything but disadvantageous to the policy followed by neighbouring and consequently more interested Powers.

The Article further gives an interesting account of the position of King Peter and of the state of affairs in Serbia generally.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTES.

The motive of Austria-Hungary in desiring a settlement of the regicide question is evidently not so much fear of disturbances in the Balkans, as a desire to expedite the purchase of Austrian guns.

April 17, 1906.

A. P.

The supposed Austrian proposal that Serbia sh[oul]d bind herself to give a preference to Austro-Hungarian manufactures would create a very undesirable precedent.

E. G[ORST].

C. H.

F. G.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 131.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/14.

(No. 36.)

Sir,

Sophia, D. April 18, 1906.

R. April 23, 1906.

My Servian Colleague spoke to me yesterday of what he termed the latest phase of German policy in the Balkan Peninsula.

Germany, M. Simitch remarked, had towards the end of 1903 become alive to the fact that the rule of Turkey in South-Eastern Europe was not destined to last for ever, and that Serbia and Bulgaria as the possible heirs presumptive of that rule, were well worth her attentions. Her attitude towards them had consequently assumed a character of benevolent reserve, and, while sparing no pains to win their good-will, she

had encouraged German capital to assist in their economic development. This policy was dictated by political as well as by material considerations, and the commercial exploitation of the two States was but intended to pave the way for the establishment of German influence as the paramount factor in the Balkans.

As an example of the sympathetic attitude which Germany had adopted towards his own country, M. Simitch informed me that during the negotiations conducted at Berlin in 1904 for the conclusion of a new Commercial Treaty, the Servian Delegates had received the formal assurance that, in the event of difficulties being raised by Austria-Hungary with regard to the transit of Servian produce through her territory, Servia could count on the intervention and good offices of Germany. A similar promise had at the same time been given to the Servian Government through the German Minister at Belgrade. When however the time had come for giving effect to it, during the crisis which occurred at the commencement of the present year in Servia's commercial relations with the Dual Empire, the attitude of Germany underwent a complete change and the influence of the German Representative both at Belgrade and Sofia was always at the service of the Austro-Hungarian Government. The reason for such a change was not, he continued, far to seek. The Conference on the Moroccan Question was at that moment on the eve of assembling, and Germany was fully aware that, unless she could secure the support of Austria-Hungary, she would find herself completely isolated. The Dual Empire, however, in view of the analogous position in which it was placed with regard to the Balkan States, was inclined to favour the French pretension that special privileges accrue to [*sic*] in all such cases to the limitrophe Power. Germany, therefore, could only purchase that Empire's support at Algeciras by engaging to support its claim to a privileged position in Balkan affairs. This, M. Simitch concluded, was the price paid by Germany for the services rendered her by the Austro-Hungarian Representative at the Conference, and we might therefore count on her influence being exercised in the future in a sense unfavourable to the development of the Balkan States themselves, as well as to the effective application of reforms in Macedonia.

While it is necessary, perhaps, to make some allowance for the Austrophobe sentiments entertained by M. Simitch, the general purport of his remarks would appear to be confirmed by the terms of the telegram which the German Emperor has addressed to Count Goluchowski,⁽¹⁾ as well as by the support which the German Agent at Sofia has consistently given his Austro-Hungarian Colleague in all the various questions which have arisen during the past four months in connection with Austro-Bulgarian commercial relations. My Italian Colleague interprets the Emperor William's telegram to mean that Germany will support Austro-Hungarian interests in the Balkan Peninsula wherever they clash with those of Italy, but whether this is really the case or whether the assurances given at Vienna will bear a wider construction, Germany will not on their account cease to push her own economic and political interests in Bulgaria.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

(¹) [*v. Gooch & Temperley*, III, p. 336, No. 400.]

No. 132.

Mr. Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 23.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. April 19, 1906.

R. April 23, 1906.

I have the honour to report that the negotiations between Austria and Servia for a new Commercial Treaty are making but little progress, and the opinion is widely expressed here that to give way to the further concessions demanded by Austria is impossible.

As matters now stand Austria through her Military Attaché here has practically presented an ultimatum to Servia which makes the ultimate granting of a Commercial Treaty conditional on the order for the guns and other contracts being placed with Austrian firms. This verbal communication was couched in such terms that General Grouitch, who is one of the mildest mannered of men, stated openly that it was only with difficulty that he restrained himself from showing Major Pomjankowski the door. So far no answer has been returned by the Servian Government and the press is protesting indignantly at this further pressure on the part of Austria.

The Austrian point of view is that Servia systematically puts Austrian tenders for all Governmental contracts aside even when financially the terms offered are better than those of other competitors and that as Austria-Hungary is all but the sole consumer of Servian exports they have a right to insist on better treatment in future. The demands of Austria as far as can be ascertained include the orders for the guns and railway material, a certain share of the loan and the contract for rock salt at present held by Roumania.

The Government here however maintain that the Commercial Treaty and the various contracts are separate questions and resent Austrian efforts to make the one dependent on the other as a species of political blackmail.

This is all the more understandable as Servia has no guarantee that the permission to export her cattle to Austria will not be stopped whenever Austria wishes to force a certain course of action on this Country and, bearing in mind former outbreaks of political swine fever, public opinion is not disposed to purchase a doubtful treaty at the further cost of the freedom of Servia to place her future orders where she will.

It is doubtless the strength of this current of hostile feeling which has led Austria into bargaining with the conspirators but whether their main object is to obtain the support of the regicide military authorities merely to secure the order for the guns for themselves, or to keep the Country in its present unsettled state in order to fish in troubled waters it is difficult to say.

The success of Austria's policy depends on Servia's powers of resistance which, thanks to her neglect to prepare for the struggle, are very limited, but the knowledge that should a surrender be forced upon them, the country will politically financially and commercially be in the hands of Austria may induce the Skupshtina to risk the dangers of a complete break with her most powerful neighbour. The possibility of this step is evidently appreciated by Germany who is using every effort to secure the reversion of Austria's influence in such a case.

This change would hardly be to the benefit of English interests and would also be regarded with mixed feelings by Servia who would I believe infinitely prefer to settle the question of relations with England and thus gain the moral support of Great Britain, France, and Italy.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

MINUTE.

An interesting account of the situation.

E. G.

No. 133.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 49.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. May 1, 1906.

R. May 7, 1906.

During a conversation which I had with the Servian Minister the other day, he told me that he had recently been called upon by his Sovereign to form a Government, but that, as he has been unable to obtain a free hand for dealing with the question of

the dismissal of the conspirators from their posts, he had not seen his way to accepting office as President of the Council.

This matter of the conspirators ought, in his opinion, to be dealt with at once, and above all it should not have been mixed up, as was now the case, with other questions, such as their commercial relations with Austria and the Artillery Contracts.

As regards the attitude of His Majesty's Government he quite understood it, and fully realized that, having once made up their minds to a certain course, they were fully justified in following it to the end.

As a matter of fact the whole country desired the same thing as His Majesty's Government, namely the dismissal of the chief conspirators from the high posts which they now held. Their occupation of their posts was preventing the country from settling down, impeding its development and progress, dividing the army into two camps, and rendering the position of the King most difficult and embarrassing both for himself and his Government.

Mr. Vouitch added that if he had been allowed to place the settlement of this question in the forefront of his programme he would have accepted office, but his conditions on this head had not been entertained, partly because the King had not been able to make up his mind to allow any decisive steps to be taken with regard to the men who had placed him on the throne, and also because there were influences at work tending to encourage His Majesty to delay the settlement or even the consideration on this question until their negotiations with Austria-Hungary had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion. There seems to be no doubt that the Austro-Hungarian Government has been doing its best to get the question of the Conspirators and the resumption of diplomatic relations with Great Britain placed in the background and that Count Goluchowski loses no opportunity of impressing upon the Servian Government the necessity of yielding to his wishes in this as in other respects if it desires to be on friendly terms with Austria-Hungary. Several people in whom I have every confidence have informed me that this is the case and that Count Goluchowski has often spoken to them in this sense.

His Excellency's idea seems to be that once Great Britain is again represented in Belgrade the chances for Austria-Hungary to profit by the present preoccupation and weakness of Russia and browbeat Servia into a state of complete dependence will be greatly lessened if not destroyed.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTE.

The evidence of our influence in support of struggling nationalities is very pleasant reading.

C. H.

E. G.

No. 134.

Mr. Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 24.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. May 2, 1906.

R. May 7, 1906.

With reference to my telegram of the 26th Ultimo I have the honour to report that, while I have been since able to verify the information contained in it, I have not obtained any further details about the private audience which the Austrian Military Attaché had with the King.

It is however certain that Austria has done her best to postpone any settlement of the conspirator question. The reason for this course of action lies in her fear lest the return of an English Minister should strengthen Servia in her resistance to the excessive demands which Austria is determined to force upon the Country in return for a commercial treaty.

Such a favourable opportunity, from an Austrian point of view, of impressing upon Serbia her utter dependance [sic] on the goodwill of Austria is not likely to occur again and there is no doubt that it will be utilized to the full.

Since the close of the war in the far east the attitude of the Russian Legation here has been one of passive inactivity in all Servian Affairs and consequently the sole counterbalance to an aggressive [sic] policy on the part of Austria is removed. The latter Country is fully aware of the disapproval [sic] with which France and Italy have viewed her Servian policy of late and sees the possible danger in the event of Anglo-Servian relations being renewed, of a combination between England France and Italy to assist Serbia both commercially and financially. Such a combination would more than outweigh the importance of Russia's temporary retirement both by widening the political connections of Serbia in Europe and by tending to free her from her present commercial dependance on Austria.

As Russia's trade with Serbia is practically nil this shifting of the balance of power in Belgrade would be doubly opposed to Austria's interest. It would also have a very important effect on Serbia's internal welfare by putting an end to the endless intrigues of the anti-Austrian and anti-Russian parties against each other which have played such a large part in Servian politics and been the cause of so many misfortunes during the past half century. As, however a Serbia, less distracted by internal jealousies and complications would be a stronger barrier to a possible extension of Austrian territory southwards and to any further increase to Austrian influence in Macedonia it may seem at Vienna that a continuation of the *Status quo* is preferable to any change which might have the effect of bringing such a consummation nearer. Such appear to me the reasons which have induced Austria to oppose any renewal of the relations between England and Serbia for the time being. Her power to do so is very considerable as the chief civilian politicians MM. Gentchitch, Balugditchitch, and Nenadovitch who have daily access to the King and whose influence upon His Majesty's decisions is undeniable, are all strongly pro-Austrian, and the commercial treaty is a lever which can bring almost irresistible [sic] pressure to bear on any Ministry which may be formed, so that both openly and behind the scenes Austrian influence is all powerful and neutralizes the effects of the anti-Austrian feeling of the Country.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

No. 135.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 51.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sophia, D. July 10, 1906.

R. July 16, 1906.

My Servian Colleague, who has just returned from Belgrade, informs me that in a long conversation which he had yesterday with General Petroff, he had impressed upon His Excellency the importance of the political consequences of an Austro-Servian Tariff war. The policy of Austria-Hungary was not merely directed to obtaining economic advantages for Austro-Hungarian industries, but aimed at the destruction of Serbia's commercial and political independence. During the German Emperor's recent visit to Vienna Serbia had been spoken of as "a bone in the throat" which must be got rid of; and in supporting Austria-Hungary Germany was but preparing the way for the realisation of the Pan-Germanic idea of reaching the Mediterranean by way of Salonica. The danger which threatened Serbia in the first line would not, as he had told General Petroff, spare Bulgaria, and it could only be conjured by united action. In making common cause with Serbia Bulgaria would risk nothing, as the balance of trade with the Dual Monarchy was so greatly in her

favour, that it was Austria-Hungary that must suffer from a rupture of commercial relations with the Principality. She would on the other hand gain immensely in political prestige and win the sympathies of all those whose interest it was to stem the advancing tide of Pan-Germanism in the Balkans.

General Petroff appears to have concurred in M. Simitch's view of the political importance of the present situation, and to have met his advances in a friendly and sympathetic spirit. His Excellency, however, was careful not to commit himself on the question of taking joint action with Serbia against Austria-Hungary; though M. Simitch hopes, from what he said, that the Bulgarian Government will postpone for a few months at any rate the resumption of their commercial negotiations with the Austro-Hungarian Government, and will facilitate the transport of Servian grain and cattle to the Black Sea by special railway rates.

M. Simitch further told me that in January last, when the question of the ratification by the Sobranie of the Serbo-Bulgarian Customs Union was still in suspense, Prince Ferdinand gave him a formal promise that Bulgaria would make common cause with Serbia in the event of the latter being driven into a Tariff War with the Dual Monarchy.⁽¹⁾ M. Simitch maintains that this promise still holds good, but the situation has so completely changed since the winter that His Royal Highness is hardly likely to take this view. On the one hand a marked improvement has been effected in Bulgaria's relations with Austria-Hungary, and, on the other Prince Ferdinand may not unreasonably contend that, as Serbia had not the courage to uphold the Customs Union in face of the pressure brought to bear on her by Austria-Hungary, His Royal Highness is no longer bound by a promise made with the object of securing the ratification of the Serbo-Bulgarian Customs Convention.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽¹⁾ [The text of this Agreement (30 March/12 April, 1904), is given in Laloy: *Les Documents Secrets . . . publiés par les Bolcheviks*. Paris (1919), pp. 18-19. It was ratified by Serbia on 11 May, 1904.]

No. 136.

Mr. Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 35.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. July 11, 1906.

R. July 16, 1906.

I have the honour to report that the provisional agreement between Austria Hungary and Serbia came to an end on the 7th instant and, all efforts to bring about an understanding between the two Countries having failed, the general tariff entered into force on both sides.

The principal reasons which led up to this step were, firstly that the Servian Government refused to accept the Austrian proposal that the duties on certain goods should be lowered and insisted upon the impossibility of changing the tariff with regard to articles already provided for in the treaty with Germany; secondly that M. Passitch required the prolongation of the provisional agreement until the close of the year instead of for three months and asked that guarantees should be given ensuring the export of a certain number of Servian live stock during that period, and lastly the refusal of the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs to give any written assurances with regard to certain Government contracts being placed with Austrian firms.

There seems no disposition on the part of the Servian Government to give way and so far M. Passitch seems to have public opinion on his side, and intends shortly to publish a blue book for presentation to the Skupshtina proving how unjustifiable the demands of Austria have always been.

The Austrian Minister left this morning on leave of absence in order to avoid being present at to-morrow's festivities in honour of the King's birthday. Baron Czikann called on me before his departure and in the course of conversation spoke very bitterly of M. Passitch and Serbia in general and declared it was impossible to deal with such people, that the Minister for Foreign Affairs never kept any of his verbal promises and steadily refused to give any written assurances with regard to Servian intentions towards Austria, and at the same time, persisted in demanding from that Country conditions which were either out of the question or else contrary to the terms of Austria's treaty with Germany. Baron Czikann finished by exclaiming very angrily that he believed M. Passitch was working to make all further understanding with Austria impossible.

Although Baron Czikann did not intend his last remark to be taken literally, it is, I am convinced, much nearer the truth than His Excellency imagines.

To free Serbia from Austrian influence both politically and commercially has long been the aim of M. Passitch and the present occasion offers him his first opportunity of forcing his policy on the Country and at the same time making it appear that no other alternative was open to him.

For the past thirty years Serbia has contented herself with producing live stock and grain stuffs merely sufficient to supply Austrian demands and since there was no incentive to produce more than the latter country could take much of the country has always lain uncultivated and the reserves of capital and labour remained largely unemployed. It is therefore evident that under these conditions Serbia can only prosper so long as the door into Hungary remains open and that as soon as Austria, from agrarian or political motives, stops or lessens the demand Serbia must suffer considerable losses or consent to purchase a return to the old conditions at the price of her commercial or even political independence [*sic*].

This is practically what has now occurred and M. Passitch sees that it is either a case of submitting and by so doing, of diminishing Serbia's future freedom of action or of resisting and breaking away once and for all from dependance on Austria.

The latter course must involve some years of strain and financial difficulty which the country is unwilling to face, but the result would be the commercial regeneration of Serbia, who would be then forced to develop all her latent resources and win for herself wider markets where her output would be no longer limited.

M. Passitch is therefore, in my opinion, in no way desirous of coming to any agreement with Austria on the old lines, but, at the same time, in order to win the support of the country, he must utilize and increase the prevailing hostility to Austria by showing that the latter country aims at reducing Serbia to a position of dependance, and the object of his present policy is to provoke Austria into taking up a more and more aggressive attitude by making offers which, while only too reasonable from a Servian point of view, are certain of being rejected at Vienna.

In the meantime every effort is being made to find out what support may be hoped for from other countries and it will depend upon the results of these enquiries whether negotiations are renewed in October or broken off in a manner which will render all retreat impossible.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

MINUTE.

Mr. Thesiger reviews the situation very well.

E. G.
July 16, 1906.

No. 137.

Mr. Thesiger to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 40.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. August 9, 1906.

R. August 13, 1906.

I have the honour to report that the Skupshtina was adjourned on the 5th instant without any definite decision having been come to with regard to the Austro-Servian dispute, the situation between the two countries remaining unchanged.

M. Passitch⁽¹⁾ has received a far larger measure of support from the opposition than was expected and in general the Skupshtina may be said to approve the attitude adopted by the Government in this question. M. Passitch has not abandoned all hopes of an understanding with Austria and new tariff arrangements with other countries are likely to be postponed until it is seen whether these hopes will be realized.

A protest has been made by the Austrian Legation here against the communication of the contents of the Blue book, a copy of which I transmit herewith,⁽²⁾ to the Skupshtina in a secret Session before the consent of the Austrian Government had been received for its publication but the protest must be considered merely as a matter of form as the consent was received on the next day. This publication has not thrown much fresh light on the situation but tends to show that so long as the Austrian Government insist on the order for the guns being placed in Austria and the Servian Government on being allowed to export a certain quantity of live-stock during the current year into Austria-Hungary the chances of an arrangement being come to are but slight.

The rumour that the Austrian Government have further put forward a demand for a convention which would allow a free passage through Serbia to Austrian troops in the event of any future development of troubles in Macedonia has been widely spread of late and although M. Passitch absolutely denies any such proposal having been made so far, he has, in speaking with one or two of the Foreign Ministers, let it be seen that he does not consider it impossible that such a demand may yet be put forward as the price of future commercial or other concessions to Serbia on the part of Austria-Hungary.

Experiments are being carried on in the Kragujevatz arsenal to see whether by various modifications the guns now in use in the Servian army cannot be rendered more effective. Although the technical value of these improvements is likely to be but very small they may serve as an excuse for declaring the order for new guns to be of less pressing importance than has hitherto been considered the case. The Government, in order to simplify the situation, would then be in a position to state that the intention to order new guns was abandoned and attempt to reopen negotiations for a commercial treaty with Austria on a new basis.

I have, &c.

WILFRED G. THESIGER.

(1) [M. Pašić formed a Ministry early in May.]

(2) [*Correspondance Diplomatique*, 3/16 March-24 June/7 July, 1906, was published by the Servian Government.]

No. 138.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 42.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. August 23, 1906.

R. August 27, 1906.

I have the honour to report that the Servian Press has almost without exception commented in a most favourable manner on the renewal of diplomatic relations with Great Britain.

The Trgovinski Glasnik of the 21st Instant (the principal Commercial paper published in Belgrade) expresses the hope that friendship with Great Britain will assure to Serbia the possibility of freer political action, and states that if the Servian Government had devoted more attention in the past to the development of the Commercial relations between Great Britain and Serbia, the latter would have secured outlets for her trade which would have saved her from many a bitter experience.

The "Stampa" of the 22nd Instant publishes an article, a translation of which I have the honour to enclose, commenting on my address to the King of Serbia on the occasion of presenting my credentials. I understand that this paper is widely read in Belgrade but represents no special political party.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Enclosure in No. 138.

(Translation.)

We cannot understand why the Government endeavour to make us believe that, although the diplomatic relations with England were not quite normal during the past three years, this was not the outcome of the 29th May but on account of intrigues and "incorrect conceptions" which were made public in England through foreign influence.

It is however interesting to know that England asked neither us Servians nor any foreigner as to her attitude towards the events of the 29th May but her attitude was the result of the moral views of the English nation. It is comical to try and deceive the public by maintaining that public opinion in England changed its incorrect conceptions for the correct ones, instead of being frank and saying that the views of the English court, Government and nation are to-day altered because the principal conspirators have been turned out of active service and because the British Government was assured that their Minister would never come in touch with any single one of the conspirators.

We could not wish for a sincerer address than that read by Mr. Whitehead to our King. His words, "I have the honour to present myself before your Majesty in order to renew the friendly relations which so happily existed in the past between Serbia and Great Britain," exclude every comment. These lines are of the greatest importance in his address as are also the first lines of His Majesty's reply.

There is not a single reader who does not understand and approve them. But besides these sincere and loyal expressions in Mr. Whitehead's address there are also some other words which will be received with the greatest pleasure by our nation.

The English Minister expressed himself as follows: "I beg Your Majesty to believe that I will employ all my energies in order to obtain the confidence of Your Majesty the Government and the Servian nation."

As a rule in such ceremonies the nation plays no part as it is never mentioned in the addresses of the newly-appointed Ministers. Exceptions to this were made by several Russian Ministers but it has been proved on more than one occasion that such expressions on their part were deceptive and have often led our dynasties to commit errors which Russia did not help them to correct. An Austro-Hungarian Minister M. Heidler thought he would also make an exception. He had the audacity to advise King Alexander as to how he ought to govern. Otherwise the addresses of the new Ministers are colourless official acts.

Mr. Whitehead's address makes an exception to this rule by the above-mentioned expression.

There is no doubt whatever that this new departure in the address of Mr. Whitehead is very important, and, as we know that the whole of our nation with the exception of the conspirators' party demanded that an issue out of the existing difficult situation should be found and that the diplomatic relations with England should be renewed we have the right to believe that those who are responsible for the actions of the British Government have a just appreciation of the political maturity of all sections

of our public services, and that in taking them into consideration they have designedly paid this compliment by means of Mr. Whitehead's address.

It was also to be expected from the representatives of a country in which so much attention is paid to public opinion that they should take into consideration the public opinion of other countries.

No. 139.

Sir B. Boothby to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 120.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. September 6, 1906.

R. September 7, 1906.

The "Zeit," a leading organ of the Vienna Press, in its issue of this morning, calls attention to information received from Belgrade from a private source according to which the Servian Prime Minister is endeavouring to mislead public opinion in Austria-Hungary and Servia by sending to Vienna with the avowed object of negotiating a commercial Treaty with Austria 4 Servian delegates who are known as the "most uncompromising partisans of a tariff-war with Austria-Hungary." "As a matter of fact" writes the "Zeit" correspondent, "M. Passitch is using every means to force a rupture with Austria-Hungary, because he wishes at all costs to have a free hand in regard to the purchase of guns, and to this end he not only makes use of his own adherents but even of the King himself, as is proved by the speech of Negotine."

I have, &c.

(For the Ambassador),

BROOKE BOOTHBY.

MINUTE.

I think the Servian Gov[ernment] are quite right in wishing to have a free hand in the purchase of their guns.

C. H.

E. G.

No. 140.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 63.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. November 14, 1906.

R. November 19, 1906.

As I had the honour to report in my Telegram No. 20 of the 8th Instant, the Skupshtina has been prorogued until the 24th of this month, in order to give time to the Government to prepare the various measures they desire to lay before the house, and especially in order to enable them to submit a definitely concluded Contract for the purchase of the Artillery Armament which the Servian Army requires, together with the arrangements for the new loans necessarily connected therewith.

Rumours have been in circulation that during this interval a partial reconstruction of the Cabinet will take place, as it is known that M. Vessnitch, the Minister of Justice, is anxious to return to his post as Envoy in Paris. Possible changes are also suggested in the Ministries of Commerce and Public Works. These readjustments are not improbable, but they would in no way constitute a change of Government, and would probably strengthen M. Passitch's Cabinet.

A number of telegrams have been recently sent from Belgrade to the Austrian and Hungarian press alleging differences between King Peter and his Government on the subject of the purchase of guns, and foretelling M. Passitch's fall, but in these reports the wish was evidently father to the thought. One of the local opposition

papers, the Nationalist "Srpska Zastava," went still further, and in its issue of the 3rd Instant published an Article practically accusing King Peter of having allowed himself to be won over to M. Passitch's views on the gun question by doubtful means. The number of the paper containing this article was promptly confiscated, but I succeeded in obtaining a copy and have the honour to enclose a précis of it.⁽¹⁾ I also enclose translation of an Article in the generally neutral and well-informed "Trgovinski Glasnik" of the 6th Instant, which sums up the various rumours which have been in circulation as to the causes which must lead to M. Passitch's resignation, but which are naturally denied in Government circles.

Since it became known that the Servian Government had signed the Preliminary Agreement for the purchase of quick-firing guns from Messrs. Schneider of Creuzot, statements have appeared in the Austrian and Hungarian press (Neue freie Presse, Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung and Pester Lloyd) to the effect that the order will amount to 60 batteries of field Artillery and 25 batteries of Mountain guns, whereas the original proposal was for 40 field and 9 Mountain batteries. This is interpreted to mean the revival of the idea of a Military Convention with Montenegro which was proposed in 1904, when Prince Nicholas is said to have made the condition that Servia should supply him with Artillery. As the order above stated would exceed the requirements of the Servian Army, it is assumed that a part of it will be handed over to Montenegro. I consider this report most improbable, especially as I am informed that the order for guns actually given to Messrs. Schneider by the Servian Government is for 45 field batteries, 9 mountain batteries, and 2 batteries for horse Artillery, figures which exactly correspond to the present nominal strength of the Servian Artillery. It would obviously be impossible to conceal for long that an order for a larger quantity had been given, but I may mention in this connection a somewhat ingenious explanation of M. Passitch's attitude in the gun question which has been suggested to me, to the effect that he insisted upon buying the guns from Messrs. Schneider because Bulgaria had done so last year, and he considered it important that the weapons of the countries should be as nearly as possible the same, and the ammunition interchangeable, in order to facilitate combined action in certain eventualities. If there is any basis for this suggestion it would of course make many things clear, including the strong line taken by Austria-Hungary in the matter. A hint in the same sense was given by the semi-official "Samouprava" on the 10th Instant, which stated that the choice of a gun manufactured by a world-renowned firm "from which the Bulgarians also had purchased their Artillery Armament," showed that the Government had in this question been guided solely by a due consideration of the interests of Servia.

The news reached Belgrade yesterday that the Minister of Finance, M. Patchu, had successfully concluded at Geneva the negotiations for a loan of 95 million francs at $4\frac{1}{2}$ % interest, the issue price being 90 gross and 86 net. The loan will be provided almost entirely by the French Group, with a small Swiss participation.

This unexpectedly good result of the loan negotiations will doubtless strengthen M. Passitch's Cabinet, and there seems no reason to suppose that he is likely to think of resigning in the immediate future.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

MINUTE.

See passage marked.

E. G[ORST].
C. H.
E. G.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

Sir B. Boothby to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/8.

(No. 180.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. November 15, 1906.

R. November 19, 1906.

During the past fortnight the subjects principally discussed here have been the scarcity in the meat market which has caused a rapid rise in prices: the deadlock in the commercial negotiations with Serbia: and the state of political relations with Italy.

The Servian misunderstanding is a cause of much annoyance and anxiety—all the keener because it has come unexpectedly. Austria has for so many years been wont to treat Serbia as a “*quantité négligeable*”—one might almost say a “*quantité méprisable*”—and to take it for granted that she must be dependent on this country for her markets, that revolt was never contemplated. Only a few weeks since a leading Vienna journal spoke of the “*impertinent attitude*” of Serbia in raising difficulties as to the Commercial Treaty. During the past fortnight however this country has been rudely awakened by the Servian Note declining the terms offered, which has been closely followed by the extensive order for artillery which Serbia has placed with the Creuzot firm. Moreover it has now transpired that Serbia has found fresh markets for her corn, and also that, in consequence of an over-reduction of her live-stock through over-exportation in the past two years, the closing of the Austrian market will be rather a benefit than a loss, since it will afford opportunity for restoring the amount of stock to its normal proportions.

It is at this moment, when Austria has hardly yet realised that Serbia has escaped from her tutelage, that she finds herself confronted with a very serious deficiency in her meat supply, owing chiefly but not entirely to the cessation of Servian imports. It is reported that in the German markets also scarcity prevails and that there is a possibility that she may be driven to open her frontiers, which would still further reduce the Austrian supply. In that case the situation might become so serious here; that Austria might be forced to come to terms with Serbia. A deputation of butchers had an audience last week of the Minister of Agriculture Count Auersperg to protest against the closing of the frontiers to foreign meat. His Excellency informed them that the Government had no intention of rescinding this regulation.

In regard to Austrian relations with Italy I have already had the honour to report at some length in my despatch No. 179 of to-day. The leading papers here which are in close touch with the Berlin Press Bureau are doubtless using the opportunity to impress on Italy the danger of denouncing the Triple Alliance. Prince Bülow's dictum that Austria-Hungary and Italy must be either allies or enemies has found an echo in the pro-German papers here. It must, however, be admitted that there is in Austria a wide-spread feeling of distrust and suspicion of Italy's aims and intentions. More constant intercourse between Representatives of public opinion and a more friendly attitude of the Press would do a great deal to reduce animosity, much of which is due to misunderstanding.

Public interest in the ministerial changes which attracted so much attention last month has now considerably abated.

Baron von Aehrenthal who has been absent at St. Petersburg to present his letters of recall, has been for the past two days at Berlin, where he is to dine with Prince Bülow and to lunch with the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Some surprise is felt here that His Excellency should leave Berlin without seeing the German Emperor. His Excellency has explained that the necessity of preparing for the Delegations prevented him from waiting another day for His Majesty's return. It is surmised in political circles here that the Emperor William was unwilling to receive the new Minister owing to his strongly pro-Russian views.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal comment by Mr. (Sir E.) Crowe: “Most unlikely.”—E. A. C.]

The new Minister of War has returned from his visit to Budapesth. In the two days that he spent there he had two interviews with the Premier Baron Wekerle and one with the Minister of the Honved. The results of these interviews have not been made public. It is believed that General von Schönaich will insist on the extra contingent of recruits; in which case it is difficult to understand what *modus vivendi* he can arrange with the Hungarian Cabinet. The Press both here and in Hungary has been singularly silent lately about this Recruit Question. It is said that in Pesth there is an unwillingness to bring this question to an issue from the fear that it might involve the fall of the present transition Government, which would be inconvenient.

Several events in the past few weeks seem to confirm the report that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand's influence with the Emperor has greatly increased. It is said that in the month of June last there was a very cordial interview between His Imperial Majesty and the Heir to the Throne; since when relations between uncle and nephew have changed for the better. The present Austrian Premier, whose appointment dates from that time, is, as you are already aware, on terms of close intimacy with the Archduke. More recently the appointments to the chief military posts seem also to show the influence of the Archduke. The retirement of Count Beck, the Chief of the Staff, followed immediately on the military manœuvres in Dalmatia, and is believed to have been hastened by the severe strictures then passed by His Imperial Highness on the arrangements made by the General Staff. The Vienna papers to-day state that, instead of General von Pitreich whose appointment was semi-officially announced, General Conrad von Hötzendorf, who is in close touch with the Archduke, is appointed as the new Chief of the Staff. Previous to these appointments, as was reported in Sir E. Goschen's Despatch No. 62, no high preferment was given to any member of the Archduke's *entourage*.

The Franchise Reform Bill has, as I have reported, passed the second reading and will shortly become law. But I hear on good authority that the present intention is to defer the General Elections until June, in order to give time for making suitable provisions for carrying the new Law into effect.

The speech of the German Chancellor on the Foreign Policy of Germany is published in this morning's papers, together with articles expressing dissatisfaction and disappointment in regard to it. The "*Neue Freie Presse*" says that Prince von Bülow was called on to answer the question whether Germany was isolated and whether her position was safe, and that he has only been able to reply that she was peaceable. The "*Zeit*" much more violent in tone declares that the speech shows the failure of German policy, which is due to the fact that the country is under a system of personal Government no longer suited for her needs. Both these journals are pro-German and in close contact with the Berlin Press Bureau.

I have, &c.

BROOKE BOOTHBY.

No. 142.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 70.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. December 11, 1906.

R. December 17, 1906.

I have the honour to report that the Skupshtina was occupied from the 26th Ultimo to the 5th Instant with the question of the proposed Artillery Armament, which was raised in the form of an interpellation by an opposition (Nationalist) Member, M. Ribaratz.

As a preliminary to his reply, M. Passitch caused all the reports of the Artillery Commissions from 1903 to 1906, altogether four in number, to be read to the house *in extenso*, and this occupied the whole of the first day's sitting.

On the second day M. Passitch gave a complete historical retrospect of the Gun question, a précis of which I venture to enclose. In it he detailed the attempts for the re-armament of the Artillery which had been made since 1903, the connection of this question with the Austro-Servian economic conflict, and the reasons which had decided the Servian Government to order the guns in France.

The remainder of the debate, on that and the following days consisted of a series of attacks upon the Government by members of The Opposition, the gist of which consisted in hints that the Government had been induced by pecuniary considerations to choose Messrs. Schneider's guns, which were of inferior quality and would bring disaster to the Servian Army in case of war.

On the 5th Instant M. Passitch closed the debate by a short speech, in which he said that he refused to take notice of the unfounded insinuations which had been made by the opposition, because the past record of the Radical Party was their best refutation.

It was a principle in all constitutional countries that Parliament should vote money for armaments but that the Government was responsible for carrying them out, and the insinuations in question had first been voiced by the foreign press, in a quarter which had never wished well to Servia. If the reports of the Artillery Commissions had been unanimous the Government could have solved the question with ease; as it was they had decided in favour of the Schneider guns, in which the improvements desired by the Artillery Commission could be carried out more rapidly than in the case of the Krupp model.

The House then divided and a vote of confidence for the Government was carried by 89 votes to 62. As M. Passitch himself did not vote, and one other Member of his party was absent, the majority accounts for all the supporters of the Government.

Meanwhile the Bill approving the new loan has been brought in as an urgent measure, and is being debated this week. Although the opposition is employing obstructive tactics, there seems little doubt of the final result, as I am informed that great unanimity prevails in favour of it in the Old Radical Club.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Enclosure in No. 142.

Précis of Speech by M. Pašić in the Shupshtina on November 27, 1906, in reply to an Interpellation by M. Ribaratz on the question of Artillery Armaments.

The gun question has been under consideration for the last three years. While King Alexander still reigned negotiations were entered into with the Skoda factory for the supply of quick-firing guns which resulted in the purchase of one battery. The trials carried out in Servia with this battery gave unsatisfactory results. After the events of the 11th June, 1903, the Minister of War despatched an Artillery Commission to various gun factories, and their report gave a choice among eight different models. Early in 1904 the Minister of War proposed the purchase of 18 batteries from Messrs. Schneider, but as the Servian finances were at that time not yet in a sufficiently satisfactory state to allow of a loan for Armament purposes under favourable conditions, the Government adjourned the question till the Autumn of 1904. But even then the financial (?) concerned declared that Servia could only count upon obtaining a favourable loan if it was to be expended (? on objects) of economic utility. In consequence of the resistance of one of the Ministers in the Grouitch Coalition Cabinet against the idea of combining a loan for railway construction with one for Armaments, a change of Government took place, and at this time, about the end of 1904, the demand for comparative trials of guns was first heard. Although the Government could have no objection to this demand on principle, the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war and the serious political situation created thereby obliged (? them) to refuse to undertake such experiments. In Servia itself

the demand was probably made from pure motives, but unfortunately it was taken up and utilized abroad, and this interference went so far that the Minister for Foreign Affairs was told that the omission to make such trials was an insult to Serbia. When the Government was attacked on this subject at home also, they agreed to undertake the comparative trials, but only on condition that they could be carried out within eight weeks. They were assured from abroad that all difficulties in regard to transit of the sample guns and ammunition through Austria-Hungary had been removed, and that the guns could arrive at Belgrade within eight days. Meanwhile three, four and eight weeks passed, and nothing arrived. The factories explained that their consignments had been returned to them on the plea that they were insufficiently well packed. When eight weeks had passed, the Government could wait no longer and therefore concluded a loan for 10,000,000 francs. In consequence of the attitude of the Skupshtina, however, a change of Government again occurred in May 1905. The new Stoyanovitch Cabinet decided, having realised the impossibility of conducting the comparative (? trials) in Serbia, to send a Commission to the different factories. Meanwhile, however, the question of Armaments had been brought into connection with that of the Commercial Treaty between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. The necessity for the conclusion of this Treaty is beyond doubt, but it is impossible for Serbia to subordinate the Armament question to it. When the present Cabinet again took office (? its first object) was to endeavour to separate these questions. The demand of Austria-Hungary that Serbia should give a written engagement to come to no decision in the armament question before the Commercial Treaty had been concluded, could not be conceded by the Servian Government because such a demand was incompatible with the dignity of Serbia. As the economic conflict dragged on from month to month, the Government decided to negotiate a combined loan for railway construction and Armaments. It is now for the Skupshtina to solve this question finally.

The development of the gun question was as follows :—

When the Artillery Commission returned, six members pronounced in favour of Krupp in the first place and Schneider in the second, and four members in favour of Schneider in the first place and Krupp in the second, but all the members made the reservation that certain changes should be made in whichever of the two models was selected. According to the classification schedule Schneiders model obtained the greatest number of "very good" marks. For this reason the Government sent a second Commission to Schneiders factory, and they requested the Minister of War to select for this second Commission officers who were perfectly reliable and correct. The latter reported, after examining the amended Schneider gun, that it was perfectly satisfactory. If we had chosen Krupp's model, the opposition would have blamed us for not taking Schneider's gun. The Servian Government have endeavoured to select the best weapon. You have seen to what extent foreign influences were exerted to prevent the armament of Serbia. If we were to continue to do nothing but make comparative trials we should never get any guns, and procrastination in so important a matter would seriously damage the credit of Serbia. If you now again prevent the solution of this question, you will thereby put a stop to the execution of many other important projects.

No. 143.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/130.

(No. 212.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. December 22, 1906.

R. December 31, 1906.

With reference to your Despatch No. 141 of the 7th instant inclosing copy of a Despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade relative to the strong feeling of

[16789]

M 2

dissatisfaction prevailing in Serbia with the Austrian Administration of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and instructing me to request His Majesty's Consul at Serajevo to furnish a general report on this subject, I have the honour to inform you that in the absence on leave of Mr. McGregor the affairs of His Majesty's Consulate are being conducted by the Italian Consul-General at Serajevo. I shall not fail to at once instruct Mr. McGregor in the sense indicated in your despatch under reply on his return to his post.

Meanwhile, the "Neue Freie Presse" of the 20th instant published a report emanating from Belgrade to the effect that the inhabitants of the Pozarevatz district, one of the largest in Serbia, had declined to take part in a public meeting summoned for the purpose of protesting against Austrian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina. "Such meetings," the report added, "have taken place lately in numerous Servian towns and, it is understood, with the knowledge, if not with the connivance of the Servian Government."

This statement has called forth an official denial from the press bureau of the Servian Government which is published *in extenso* in the "Neue Freie Presse" of to-day's date and which reads as follows:—"With reference to the statements contained in the Neue Freie Presse relative to the public meetings recently held in various towns of Serbia to protest against Austrian rule in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to the allegation that such meetings were inspired by the Servian Government, it is authoritatively stated that the Servian Government both dissociates itself from and disapproves of such demonstrations. These meetings, however, having invariably been held within closed doors, the Servian Government is precluded from forbidding them under the conditions governing the right of public meeting, which confine the Government's scope of interference to open-air meetings."

I shall not fail to keep you informed of any further developments which may take place in this agitation, and which may attract attention in this country.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 144.

Extract from Annual Report for Bulgaria for the Year 1906.

(Enclosure in Sir G. Buchanan's despatch No. 1 of January 1, 1907.)

F.O. 371/202.

Austria-Hungary. Serbo-Bulgarian Customs Union Treaty of 1905. 61.

Suspicion of Austria is common to both Serbia and Bulgaria, though it does not take so acute a shape in the latter as in the former. During the earlier years of Prince Ferdinand's reign Austria was one of the friendly Powers to whom Bulgaria looked for assistance against Russian aggression, and so long as Count Kálnoky was at the Ballplatz the attitude of the Austrian Government was always a benevolent one. Shortly after Count Goluchowski's assumption of office Austrian sympathy was estranged by the fall and assassination of Stamboloff and by the conversion of Prince Boris. Bulgaria was, in consequence, left severely alone. When, a few years later, the growing influence of Russia induced Count Goluchowski to depart from this attitude of aloofness, his policy never inspired sympathy or confidence at Sophia. Though a Slav by birth, he was generally credited with favouring Hellenic rather than Slavonic aspirations, and with being adverse to anything in the shape of a Balkan Confederation. The veto placed by him, early in 1906, on the Serbo-Bulgarian Customs Treaty was at once attributed to his dislike of an instrument that might contain the germs of a future political understanding. The Treaty had already been voted by acclamation by the

Sobranje, and Prince Ferdinand had even promised to make common cause with Serbia should its ratification by the Skupstchina land the latter in a Tariff war with the Dual Monarchy. Serbia, however, preferred to drop the Treaty altogether, and Bulgaria, who had been on the verge of a rupture of commercial relations with Austria, arranged a *modus vivendi* with that Empire on the basis of mutual most-favoured-nation treatment. She has meanwhile done what she can to assist Serbia by granting special railway rates for the transport of her cattle and grain to the Black Sea ports.

No. 145.

Mr. G. Young to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/328.

(No. 32.)

Sir,

Belgrade, D. April 29, 1907.

R. May 6, 1907.

I have had several opportunities lately of learning the views of M. Pashitch on Servian national policy. Though merely given in the course of friendly conversation, they may be of interest as the opinions of a Premier who is popularly credited with being the principal factor in the present policy of Serbia.

Speaking with reference to this policy, and to the rupture of Commercial relations with Austria, M. Pashitch said that the importance of the renewal of negotiations might be overestimated. The policy of Vienna in renewing relations with Serbia was intimately bound up in the settlement of relations between Austria and Hungary. To Serbia, moreover the terms of this temporary resettlement and the time at which the final rupture might be expected were considerations of such significance that in comparison the terms, or time, of a restoration of conventional régime with Austria-Hungary were of minor and momentary importance. A renewal of relations with Austria-Hungary would no doubt relieve Serbia from the strain of a considerable commercial crisis but a rupture between Austria and Hungary would remove the danger of such a crisis having ever again to be encountered.

By the territorial adjustments of 1878 Austria had succeeded in making Serbia an enclave in her economic sphere and it was an essential part of this policy that Serbia should be enabled to find a market in Austria, on the most favourable terms, for her agricultural and animal products. Serbia was thereby encouraged to consider preferential relations with Austria a necessary of national existence, and to provide in return a preferential market to Austrian manufacturers. But the demand for protection by the agrarians of Hungary had so thwarted the Imperial policy that at every renewal of this commercial régime there had been a reduction of concessions to Servian produce and a consequent reduction of Servian consumption of Austrian goods. The consequences to Austro-Hungarian political predominance had been considerable and the clauses of the successive conventions themselves as clearly showed the decline of Imperial control as customs statistics showed the decline of Austrian Commerce. The Convention to be concluded this year would continue this process to a point at which Austria-Hungary would be placed on the same conventional footing as other States of Europe.

Serbia owed this extension of her economic independence to the demand for protection of the agrarian interests of Hungary. But Hungary had of late years also become to a large extent an industrial community and this had brought her, and would bring her more and more, into collision with industrial Austria and into closer relations with agrarian Serbia. If, or rather when, Hungary succeeded in obtaining a separate Customs system Serbia would thereby be cut off from Austria and would geographically enter the economic sphere of Hungary. This would be a crisis in the history of Serbia and there was a possibility that the force of circumstances might temporarily relegate

the country to the position of Croatia; but the more likely contingency would be of contrary tendency and in favour of Serbia, for it would then become the interest of Austria to reopen communications with Serbia by the detour of the Adriatic and Bosnia-Herzegovina. Serbia would thereby not only obtain the direct outlet to the sea now so carefully closed against her but would also have in Austria and in Hungary alternative markets for such of her produce as was unsuitable for distant transport. Further coercion by a constricting tariff would be impossible and it might be expected that the Austrian and Hungarian Capitalist and consumer would compete for her produce and transit trade. Possibilities still more favourable to Serbia existed in the probability that Croatia and Slavonia would desire to detach themselves from the Hungarian Customs system though M. Passitch did not think they would succeed in doing so within any appreciable period. But at a later stage of their economic development they might succeed and then Serbia would possess two alternative land routes to Western Europe. Hungary must however retain free access to the Adriatic at Fiume and before that point could be settled changes in the situation might have occurred by quicker processes than the developments of national economy.

So far as concerned the immediate present and the internal politics of Serbia the prospect of a reopening of the negotiations with Austria was undoubtedly a great relief to Serbia and a welcome reinforcement to his Government. He hoped to have an interview with the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs on his return from England after which he would know more as to how matters stood. Negotiations with Germany would follow as a corollary to those with Austria.

I have, &c.
GEORGE YOUNG.

No. 146.

Extract from Annual Report for Austria-Hungary for the Year 1907.

(Enclosure in Sir E. Goschen's despatch No. 72 of May 11, 1908.)

Serbia.

F.O. 371/398.

39. The best that can be said of the relations between Austria-Hungary and Serbia is that they are considerably better than they were in the last days of Count Goluchowski's tenure of office. It will be remembered that the result of the latter's policy was a commercial war between the two countries, when the frontiers of Austria-Hungary were closed against Serbia's exports. Although this action on the part of Austria-Hungary has been indirectly of benefit to Serbia, as it forced her to find fresh markets for her produce, which she has done with some measure of success, it was, of course, a state of affairs which it was to the interest of neither country to continue. To Serbia it was a source of serious pecuniary loss; while to Austria it was made plain that there was every chance of a trade over which her geographical situation had hitherto given her almost complete control slipping from her hands. The result was a Treaty of Commerce, which took long to negotiate, and which apparently satisfied none of the parties concerned. The Servians considered that, as the weaker side, they had been trampled on; the Austro-Hungarian Agrarians thought that their interests had been sacrificed to those of the Industrials; while the latter complained bitterly that the Agrarians had been unduly favoured. Nevertheless, the general opinion is that the Treaty is on the whole satisfactory, and it is certain that, for political reasons, Baron d'Aehrenthal did his best for Serbia.

40. Ever since his Excellency has been in office he has done all in his power to remove the bad feeling in Serbia caused by Count Goluchowski's policy, and it is well known that he worked very hard to make the Commercial Treaty as favourable as possible to that country. He even insisted for a long time upon giving Serbia the right to export live cattle to Austria-Hungary. The Prime Minister, however, who was anxious at that time to secure the support of the Agrarian party in other questions, was obdurate, and finally Baron d'Aehrenthal had to give way. That is, I believe, the only point in the Treaty, and it is certainly a very important one, upon which there is a considerable amount of discontent in Serbia.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TURKEY AND THE GREAT POWERS IN 1906.

I. FINANCIAL REFORMS AND MACEDONIA.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The Naval Demonstration of the Powers in 1905 settled the question of Financial Reform. The details are given at some length in *A. & P.* (1907), C. (*Cd.* 3455) and (*Cd.* 3497), pp. 257–548. Here it seems sufficient to reproduce some extracts from the Annual Report on Turkey for the year 1906, the first year for which such a Report exists.]

Extract from Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1906.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Mr. G. Barclay, No. 43, of January 18, 1907.
R. February 11, 1907.)

F.O. 371/345.

Customs Increase Negotiations.

The matters of most importance engaging the attention of the Embassy at Constantinople during 1906 were the proposed increase of the Turkish customs duties from 8 to 11 per cent.,⁽¹⁾ and the Egyptian frontier question. There can be no doubt that the leading part taken by His Majesty's Government in the negotiations regarding the former question and the resolute handling of the latter have produced an excellent effect, and British prestige stands higher in Turkey to-day than it has for some time past.

Various attempts have been made in the past by the Ottoman Government to secure the consent of the Capitulatory Powers to a 3 per cent. increase in the customs duties, but for the purpose of this Memorandum it is unnecessary to go further back than the 30th April last, when the Porte addressed a note to the Embassies stating that it found itself compelled to proceed at an early date to levying the additional 3 per cent., and expressing its confidence that the Powers would consent. A reply was returned by the Embassies on the 28th May, setting forth the conditions on which the assent of the Powers would be given for a period of seven years, the most important being (1) compliance with demands which had already been made regarding reforms in the Turkish custom-house, and regarding amendments in the Mining Law and in the Regulations for Chemical Analysis in the Customs; and (2) an effective guarantee was to be given that the proceeds of the increased duties accruing to the Ottoman Government (25 per cent. of the proceeds go to the Ottoman Debt under the provisions of the "Annexe" of 1903 to the Decree of Muharrem) should be exclusively devoted to meeting the deficit in the Macedonian Budget, and that the Porte would meet any further deficit which might occur. As regards No. 1, it should be mentioned that His Majesty's Embassy had for years past been endeavouring to secure amendments in the Mining Law and in the Chemical Analysis Regulations, and the reforms needed in the Custom-house had already been indicated on general lines in a note presented by the Embassy two or three months before, to which the Porte had answered promising satisfaction. The Porte's reply to the joint note of the 28th May was delivered to the Embassies on the 21st June. While stating that the Customs Regulations, the Mining Law and the Chemical Analysis Regulations had been amended, it was unsatisfactory in that it failed to give the effective guarantee demanded as regards the exclusive employment of the proceeds of the surtax for Macedonia, and the Porte merely undertook to make good the deficit so far as its share in the proceeds of the increased duties (75 per cent.) would enable it to do so; whereas it was already bound,

(1) [*v. G.P. XXII, ch. 163, passim.*]

under Article 12 of its Arrangement with the Ottoman Bank of March 1905 to make good any deficit which might occur in the Macedonian Budget. The Porte also objected to the limitation of the surtax to seven years, proposing that it should continue to be levied until new Treaties of Commerce had been concluded with the Powers.

On the 10th July His Majesty's Government addressed a Memorandum to the Governments of Austria and Russia, in which the opinion was expressed that, in view of the unsatisfactory nature of the Porte's reply and of its failure to carry out its engagement to make good the deficit in the Macedonian Budget, the moment had arrived to review the situation which had arisen, and to reconsider the terms upon which the assent of the Powers might be given to the proposed increase in the customs duties. The terms now proposed to the Powers were briefly as follows:—

1. The Porte was to fulfil its engagements as regards customs improvements, and the texts of the amended Mining Law and Chemical Analysis Regulations were to be communicated officially to the Powers;
2. An effective guarantee was to be given that the portion of the surtax accruing to Government would be properly collected and exclusively applied to Macedonia; the obligation of the Porte to provide for the whole of the deficit was to be reaffirmed; and it was to be made clear that, in the event of there being an excess of revenue over expenditure in any one year, the surplus was to form a reserve not to be applied to other purposes without the consent of the Powers;
3. The surtax was not to be put in force without two months' notice;
4. Was to be limited to seven years;
5. No increase was to be made in the amount of military expenditure chargeable to the Macedonian Budget; and
6. Certain demands relating to the gendarmerie in Macedonia which had already been presented to the Porte by the Powers in March, but which had so far elicited no reply, were to be complied with, the chief amongst these being that the gendarmerie should be armed with repeating rifles and have the right to intervene in the case of offences committed by the troops.

After some demur, instructions were sent from Vienna and St. Petersburg to Baron Calice and M. de Zinoview to concert with their colleagues for a note based on the proposals of His Majesty's Government; nevertheless, it was only with great difficulty that the six Representatives of the Great Powers were able to agree as to its terms. His Majesty's Embassy receiving consistent support only from the Russian Ambassador. The *entente cordiale* brought us no assistance from M. Constans, whose attitude towards Macedonia may be tersely indicated by an expression he was fond of using at the time "Je me f— de la Macédoine." Baron Calice opposed us strongly, partly no doubt owing to his annoyance at the leading part taken by His Majesty's Government, which seemed to threaten the privileged position of Austria and Russia in Macedonia. It was, of course, to be expected that the German Ambassador would show himself tender towards Turkish susceptibilities, and he did his utmost to mitigate the severity of our demands until he realized that there was no chance of our whittling them down; but when once the joint note was presented he was foremost in pressing the Porte to accept the terms laid down. The note finally agreed upon and presented to the Porte on the 30th September embodied all the essentials of the Memorandum of the 10th July, for though it was found impossible to obtain the consent of all the Powers to the stipulation that any surplus of revenue over expenditure in any one year should form a reserve earmarked for Macedonia, and to the limitation of the military expenditure chargeable to the Macedonian Budget, the danger that the Civil Budget would suffer from increased military expenditure would seem to be sufficiently guarded against by the demand to which all the Powers finally adhered, that the Financial Commission should have the last word in the fixing of the civil expenditure. In more than

one respect indeed the joint note went further than the Memorandum of the 10th July, for, in consequence of the insistence of Sir N. R. O'Connor, a most salutary stipulation, which had not found a place in the gendarmerie demands presented in March, was inserted for a regular supply of recruits. Our demands too relating to custom-house reforms were stated with somewhat more precision than had been the case in the former note, for it had become evident that but little progress had been made in carrying out the improvements desired. Besides a general demand for the fulfilment of the Porte's promises as regards reforms, the note demanded that a sum of £ T. 100,000 should be appropriated for the reconstruction and improvement of the custom-house depôts, &c., and also that the question of the custom-house porters should be satisfactorily settled. It should be mentioned that this question has been for long a standing grievance with merchants. The porters form a Guild under the protection of Palace favourites, who derive a large revenue from the Guild's funds. The Guild has the monopoly of customs portage and yet is entirely independent of the Customs Administration. What is really needed is that it should be brought under the control of that Administration.

The Porte replied to this communication on the 9th November. Its note communicated the documents desired and gave the effective guarantee demanded by notifying an arrangement with the Ottoman Debt, by which the Debt, which by its powers under the Decree of Muharrem will control the collection of the 3 per cent. surcharge, undertakes to pay over to the Budget of the three vilayets the whole of the proceeds accruing to Government. It is not necessary to give a summary of the whole note. In principle it was a complete acceptance of the terms of the Powers. In two respects, however, His Majesty's Government could not regard it as final: (1) In order to reaffirm the Porte's obligation undertaken under Article 12 of the Agreement of March 1905 with the Ottoman Bank, to meet any deficit which might occur in the Macedonian Budget, the joint note had stipulated for a guarantee from the Ottoman Debt of any deficiency up to £ T. 250,000 in any one year. The Porte in its reply was unable to state that this guarantee had been furnished, but it promised that as soon as the President of the Debt, Commandant Berger, returned from leave, the necessary arrangement would be come to and would be communicated to the Embassies; (2) while the Porte undertook to spend £ T. 100,000 on improvements in the customs depôts, the Portage Regulations which it communicated could not be accepted off-hand as a satisfactory settlement of the question; and, as regards other reforms in the custom-house, the note merely reiterated the assurances which it had already given, and which it stated had afforded complete satisfaction to commercial interests. On the 16th November, His Majesty's Government informed the Embassy that they could not accept the Porte's note until a satisfactory arrangement had been concluded with the Ottoman Debt for the annual guarantee of £ T. 250,000 for Macedonia, and until the Embassy was able to report that substantial progress had been made in the improvements in the custom-house. Subsequent investigations by the Embassy, the result of which is embodied in a Report by Mr. Weakley, have shown that there has been little real reform in the customs, and particularly that the abuses complained of by merchants in connection with the Porters' Guild are as frequent as ever. The Embassy is about to submit to His Majesty's Government a list of *desiderata** in connection with the Customs Administration to serve as a basis for detailed demands which, if complied with, will, it is hoped, effect some real improvement. As regards the other point raised by His Majesty's Government, the subsequent negotiations between the Porte and the Council of the Debt which resulted in the required guarantee of £ T. 250,000 a-year being given for Macedonia, are of special interest, as they throw light on the plans of Germany for financing the construction of the Bagdad Railway. Two sources exist from which the Public Debt could give this guarantee, viz., the surplus of the ceded

* January 18.—These *desiderata* have now been communicated unofficially to the Director-General of the Customs, with the exception of those relating to the portage question, which have seemed to the Embassy too important to be communicated even unofficially without express authorisation from His Majesty's Government. [G.B. (*Ed.* This note and that on p. 171 are unsigned, but appear to be by Mr. G. Barclay.)]

revenues, or those revenues collected by the Administration for the service of the loans under its control, and the surplus of what are known as the "revenue divers," or tithes and other revenues assigned for kilometric guarantees and collected by the Administration of the Debt. There is good reason to believe that an understanding exists between the Sultan and the German Government by which the former of these surpluses, [which] when cleared of certain temporary charges will amount to some £T. 260,000† a-year, will eventually be employed as security for Bagdad Railway construction loans, and it was therefore to be expected that any proposal to pledge this surplus for Macedonia would be vigorously opposed by the German Delegate on the Council of the Debt. Curiously enough, however, at the meeting of the 3rd December, when the Council first had official cognizance of the guarantee demanded by the Powers, the Council by a unanimous vote acceded to the request of the Minister of Finance that it should provide the £T. 250,000 a-year in case of need, pledging for the purpose the surpluses of both the ceded revenues and the "revenue divers." There is reason to believe that the German Ambassador had previously arranged with the Porte that the Debt should be directed to reimburse itself from the latter surplus only, and it has never been explained how the request of the Minister of Finance came to take the form it did, or how it was that it met with no opposition in the Council. Whatever may be the explanation of what occurred, it is certain that on the following day Baron von Marschall proceeded to the Porte and prevailed upon the Minister of Finance to withdraw his request, thus rendering the Council's vote of no effect. On the 6th an informal meeting of the Council was held to consider another proposal from the Porte, involving the hypothecation for the required £T. 250,000 of the surplus of the "revenue divers" only. The British Delegate did not consider this latter surplus sufficient security, for though in normal years it should amount to some £T. 400,000, it is subject to great fluctuations from year to year. Mr. Block therefore held out for a supplementary guarantee of at least £T. 50,000 from the ceded revenues; but Commandant Berger, the French Delegate and President of the Council, vigorously opposed him, and he was left in a minority of one. Mr. Block had no better success at the formal meeting on the 10th, when the Porte's second proposal was finally accepted, and the Porte has since communicated this arrangement to the Embassies. . . . Now that the guarantee has been given by the Debt for Macedonia the negotiations for the increase are practically narrowed down (I do not mention one or two minor points raised by the French and Russian Ambassadors which are in a fair way of adjustment) to the Customs demands which His Majesty's Government may decide to present based on the *desiderata* to be submitted by this Embassy. Whether these demands are to be presented by His Majesty's Embassy alone, or jointly with other Embassies, is not yet certain. . . .

The condition of Macedonia has shown no real improvement during 1906, for while the three vilayets have been relatively free from military and Moslem excesses and while Bulgarian and Servian bands have been comparatively quiet during the greater part of the year, the Greek bands recruited from Greece and Crete have been very active until winter interfered with their operations. The worst feature of this Hellenist propaganda, by means of murder and outrage, is the support and encouragement given by the Greek Consular Officers and the high dignitaries of the Œcumenical Church. Although the Bulgarian bands have been fairly quiescent, it would seem from language recently used by the Grand Vizier that his Highness apprehends that a more active policy may be adopted by them in the spring. Certainly there is no sign that they have been encouraged from Sophia. Indeed, the relations between Turkey and Bulgaria have of late been fairly satisfactory. There were a number of the usual frontier incidents in the summer and for a time relations were somewhat strained. Matters were not improved by the knowledge that the Bulgarian autumn manœuvres were to be held near the frontier. There is no doubt that the Porte

† The surplus really amounts to £T. 400,000, but this is subject to certain permanent charges of £T. 139,000. [G. B.]

was at one time considerably alarmed, and a large number of second class Redifs were called to the colours. There was, however, never anything approaching to a concentration of troops on the frontier, and the strain was only of short duration. A visit which Nedjib Pasha, on behalf of the Sultan, paid Prince Ferdinand at Marienbad when pacific assurances were exchanged produced a good effect, and the improvement made further progress when M. Petkoff succeeded M. Petroff as Prime Minister at Sophia. Still, it is hardly to be expected that the Bulgarian bands will remain idle indefinitely while the Exarchist villages are being gradually exterminated, and it is to be hoped that every possible effort will be made at Athens to prevent the resumption of Patriarchist activity in the spring. The Porte has demanded the recall of some of the more militant of the Greek Consuls, and the Grand Vizier has stated to His Majesty's Embassy that the Greek Government is about to remove the Consul at Drama, whose complicity with the bands formed the subject of representations to the Greek Government from His Majesty's Government last October. The Porte has also repeatedly pressed the Patriarchate for the removal of the most bloodthirsty of its prelates, such as the Metropolitans of Castoria and Drama, but so far without success, the Patriarch alleging that the proofs of their complicity are insufficient. In reply to representations which have been made from time to time by this Embassy, the Grand Vizier has been profuse in his protestations as to the energetic measures taken by the authorities for the prevention of the passage of bands across the Greek frontier and for the suppression of those already in Macedonia, but, unfortunately, cases have continued to occur where the civil and military authorities have shown a lack of energy quite incompatible with any real wish to restore order. Their inexcusable inaction on various occasions and the lenient treatment of Greek malefactors in the Courts, as compared with the cruel penalties inflicted on Bulgarian suspects, go far to justify the suspicion that, however much alive the Grand Vizier may be to the expediency of suppressing the unscrupulous Patriarchist propaganda of massacre and crime, the local authorities still find it to their advantage to tolerate outrage when the perpetrators are not Bulgarians.

The Grand Vizier, there is every reason to believe, is in earnest in his efforts to combat the chauvinism of the Patriarchate. Apart from the question of the Greek bands, he is engaged in a struggle with the Patriarch on behalf of the Koutzo Vlachs. In 1905, Roumania succeeded in obtaining the recognition by the Sultan of the Vlachs as constituting a separate community. An Iradé was issued conceding to them civil rights enjoyed by other non-Mussulman communities in the Ottoman Empire, such as the selection of their own Mukhtars, representation on the Administration Councils of the province, and, finally, the granting by the Imperial authorities of facilities to their school inspectors and teachers. This Iradé was officially communicated to the Roumanian Legation which also received from the Porte a verbal promise of full liberty for the use of the Vlach language in schools and churches. The Roumanian Legation has for long been endeavouring, with support especially from the German Embassy, to obtain the execution of this promise. The Porte is anxious to settle the question in favour of the Vlachs, but the Patriarchate realizes that this would mean that it would lose its hold over a large number of its present fold, and so far the Patriarch has stubbornly resisted the representations of the Grand Vizier. The Palace has recently intervened on behalf of the Vlachs; but in view of the ultra-chauvinist tendencies of the Holy Synod, there seems little prospect of the Patriarch yielding. It seems almost unnecessary to point out that this *non possumus* attitude of the Patriarchate, the common enemy of Vlachs and Exarchists, must tend to bring Roumania and Bulgaria closer together.

As regards reforms in Macedonia, no fresh ground has been broken, for though the question of judicial reform is occupying the attention of more than one of the Powers, no scheme has yet been put forward. In several respects, however, the position of the Financial Commission and the gendarmerie has been ameliorated—as far as paper engagements can improve matters. In describing the negotiations for the increase in the customs duties, it was stated that His Majesty's Government had succeeded in

securing the introduction of a stipulation ensuring that in the framing of the Civil Budget the last word should rest with the Commission. In its note of the 9th November, the Porte undertook that in case the Commission should think fit to make changes in the Budget, the Porte would entirely conform to the amendments introduced. The value of this concession will depend on the attitude of the Civil Agents, who, with the German Delegate and with the Inspector-General and the Turkish Delegate, could always out-vote their colleagues. Their attitude in the past, both in the administrative field, where they have been little better than Hilmi Pasha's tools, and on the Financial Commission, where they have consistently endeavoured to restrict the Commission's powers, cannot be said to be encouraging for the future. Germany has, of course, her own special reasons for wishing to be tender with the Turks, but the object of the Civil Agents in obstructing the reforms is not so clear. It may surely be presumed that their two Governments are, for the moment at least, desirous for the maintenance of the *status quo*, which is obviously more likely to be preserved if it is made bearable to the unhappy population by as wide a utilization as possible of the reforms introduced.

Throughout the year the Commission has been hampered by want of funds. It has indeed been possible to pay the civil salaries with fair regularity, but military expenditure is greatly in arrear. There has never been any of the ordinary revenue available to make good the monthly deficit, and the deficiency has had to be met with the proceeds of loans. At the end of November, the deficit shown by Mr. Harvey's Monthly Report amounted to £ T. 300,000, but since then an advance of £ T. 250,000 has been obtained from the Ottoman Bank for Macedonia. The figures for the end of the year are not yet to hand, but of the proceeds of the bank's advance more than £ T. 150,000 have been placed to the credit of the three vilayets, so that the deficit must have been materially reduced.

As regards the gendarmerie, the Porte, in the negotiations regarding the increase in the customs duties, has granted certain demands presented last March, *i.e.*, it has formally admitted the right of the gendarmerie to intervene in the case of offences committed by the troops; it has undertaken to arm the force with repeating rifles, and, most important of all, it has bound itself to provide a regular supply of recruits in full conformity with General Degiorgis' demands. Amongst the many forms of obstruction encountered by the General at the hands of the authorities the worst has been the refusal to supply an adequate number of recruits. Throughout the summer and autumn his repeated appeals for men, supported by the Embassies in Constantinople, were persistently ignored, until at the end of November the force showed a deficiency of 17 per cent.; and the foreign Staff Officers, in an identic communication to their respective Embassies, declared that unless 300 men from the colours in Macedonia, having some knowledge of the languages spoken in the three vilayets, were supplied before the 15th December, the reorganization of the gendarmerie must be considered not only as hindered, but as finally paralyzed by the Ottoman Government's own wish. It was decided by the Embassies to communicate this declaration to the Porte collectively, and the dragomans of the Embassies attended at the Porte for the purpose; but meanwhile the German and Italian Ambassadors had had audiences of the Sultan, at which they had most earnestly impressed upon him the necessity of meeting General Degiorgis' requirements, with the result that an Iradé was issued, ordering the supply of the 300 recruits as desired, thus rendering unnecessary the collective representation contemplated. Under General Degiorgis the gendarmerie has developed into a *corps d'élite*, but its usefulness is paralyzed by the obstruction of the local authorities—obstruction which has shown a tendency to increase, as the authorities have come to realize that the corps as reorganized has real potentialities for reform. In a series of meetings at Salonica at the end of November, General Degiorgis and his Staff Officers drew up a list of *desiderata* to be pressed upon the Porte. Of these the most important were: (1) that the force should be increased (an increase of 500 men is desired by General Degiorgis); (2) that certain rules should be established once and for all for the regular supply of recruits; and (3) an expression of regret at the obstruction encountered by the reorganizing officers at the hands of the civil and military

authorities. The anodyne wording of No. 3 was adopted in order to secure unanimity. The German Staff Officer refusing to adhere to anything more explicit. The *desiderata* were communicated to the Embassies, but no collective action has been taken yet, as General Degiorgis has himself come to Constantinople, and after presenting a *pro-memoria* to the Sultan, is in negotiations with the Minister of War and the Grand Vizier, which he hopes will result in a favourable reply on all points. He has considerably elaborated the *desideratum* regarding the obstruction of the local authorities, and his demands on this point, if complied with, should go far to put an end to the obstruction complained of. Better, however, than all the detailed reforms aimed at in the list of *desiderata* would be the "mot d'ordre" from Yildiz that the obstruction must cease. Unfortunately there is as yet no sign that the Sultan realizes that the reforms are in Turkey's own interests, and that in their success lies the best chance of the *status quo*. . . .

[ED. NOTE.—The remainder of this section details the various schemes of judicial reform.]

II. THE RELATIONS OF THE POWERS TO TURKEY, 1906.

[ED. NOTE.—The following documents illustrate the views of the different Powers on the Near Eastern problem during 1906. The most important of these is probably Mr. (afterwards Sir) Adam Block's report on Franco-German Economic Penetration into Turkey.]

No. 147.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/153.

(No. 452. Confidential.)

Sir,

Therapia, D. July 3, 1906.

R. July 16, 1906.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith copy of a memorandum prepared by Mr. Block, the British Delegate on the Council of the Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt, and kindly communicated by him to the Embassy, on the subject of the position and influence acquired by the French and German financial groups working together in Turkey, and on the results to British interests which are likely to ensue from that co-operation.⁽¹⁾

The paper gives a careful and interesting review of the various railway enterprises and financial operations undertaken, with considerable immediate profits, by French and German capitalists, and Mr. Block expresses his apprehension that the non-participation of British financiers in these combinations will ultimately result in placing France and Germany in a specially favourable position for interfering in the arrangements to be made consequent on the financial cataclysm which he appears to think, and perhaps rightly, is inevitable in Turkey, notwithstanding the stability which her credit derives from the existence of the Public Debt Administration.

The reluctance of British capitalists to embark in enterprise of any description in this country is a fact which has been evident for many years past, but if they abstain from operations of this kind, they are still ready to embark in purely commercial enterprises, and to a certain degree also in the mining industry, and they would I think probably have participated willingly in the Baghdad Railway had it

⁽¹⁾ [The statement, publicly made in England, that 60% of the import trade of Turkey was in the hands of British merchants was found to be extremely inaccurate, though based on a statement emanating from the British Embassy at Constantinople (No. 116 of February 14, 1905). v. Sir E. Grey to Mr. G. Barclay No. 428 of September 27, 1906.]

not been for the strong anti-German political feeling which has of late years prevailed in England.

It is I think open to question whether the French capitalists who have engaged in railway undertakings and other public works in Turkey have on the whole had even a reasonable return on their money, while as regards the Loans to the Turkish Government, the profits, which have undoubtedly been made, have accrued rather to the Syndicates who have effected the various transactions, than to the subscribing public in France, and it would be premature to say yet whether the latter will have cause to rejoice or to regret their eager purchase of Ottoman funds.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

Enclosure 1 in No. 147.

Memorandum by Mr. Block respecting Franco-German Economic Penetration.

The first appearance of German financial establishments in the arena of Turkish finance may be dated from October 3, 1888. Up to that time, although German Houses and the German investing public had doubtless been buyers of Turkish stock, yet they had hitherto been merely ordinary investors rather than the principals in loan operations and financial transactions with the Ottoman Government. Since the failure of the Turkish Government to meet its liabilities just before the Turco-Russian War, the field they now entered upon had been left almost exclusively to the Imperial Ottoman Bank, and as England for various reasons had turned its attention elsewhere, the French Committee of that Establishment had practically no competitors with which to contend.

In 1888 Mr. Alfred Kaulla, Director of the Württembergische Vereinsbank at Stuttgart, in the name and on behalf of the Deutsche Bank at Berlin and its group, contracted for a 5 % Loan of £ stg. 1,500,000, secured on the Fishery and other specified revenues to be handed over for collection to the Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt. This loan is generally known as the "Fisheries" Loan.

In 1890, the Ottoman Bank, with the assistance of the Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt, proceeded to the conversion of the 5 % Priority loan of £ stg. 7,427,240 into a 4 % loan of £ stg. 7,827,240, and to the creation of a new loan called the "Osmanieh" Consolidation loan for £ stg. 4,545,000, with interest at 4 %, secured on revenues collected by the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. On the 1/13 March, 1894, however, the Germans again appeared on the scene, and the 4 % Railway loan for frs. 40,000,000 was the result of their negotiations.

The German group was represented by Mr. Alfred Kaulla, acting in the name and on behalf of the Deutsche Bank, the Württembergische Vereinsbank and the Deutsche Vereinsbank at Frankfort; and by Mr. Maurice Bauer, Director of the Wiener Bankverein, in the name and on behalf of the Dresdner Bank at Berlin and the Banque Internationale de Paris.

This seems to be the starting point of the Franco-German *entente* on Turkish finance.

In 1896, the Ottoman Bank contracted for a 5 % loan of £ stg. 2,975,200, on the annuity of £ stg. 163,636 being secured on the Sheep Tax in certain Provinces, and upon the tithes, estimated to yield £ stg. 72,727 per annum, the collection of which is in the hands of the Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt. In December, 1901, the same Bank signed a contract for a 5 % loan of £ stg. 1,140,000, which was also secured on the tithes of certain districts to be collected by the Public Debt Administration.

The 5 % Customs loan of 1886 (£ stg. 5,909,080) was converted by the Bank in 1902 (new capital 7,818,181) and the 5 % Fisheries loan of 1888, mentioned above, was converted in 1903 by a contract between Mr. Arthur Gwinner, representing the Deutsche Bank, and the Turkish Government, the Administration

of the Debt still being intrusted with the collection of the revenues assigned for the annuity. The new loan became a 4 % one, and the new capital was raised to £ stg. 2,400,000.

On March 5, 1903, the Government once more contracted with the Germans for a new loan of £ stg. 2,160,000, with interest at 4 %. This loan, the first of a series, is the Baghdad Railway loan (1st series). The annuity, amounting to £ stg. 96,363, is secured on certain tithes collected by the Public Debt Administration. The contract was signed by Mr. Gwinner, Dr. Zander and by M. Huguenin, on behalf of the Anatolian and Baghdad Railway Companies, and by Mr. Gwinner on behalf of the Deutsche Bank. The French bankers were given a participation of 40 %.

Again the Ottoman Bank steps in and contracts for a 4 % loan of £ stg. 2,500,000, secured on the surplus revenues of the Public Debt Administration. This was in September 1903 but the loan has not yet been issued to the Public. The Bank, however, has advanced the sum of £ stg. 1,100,000 at 5 % interest.

In November, 1903 the 5 % loan of 1901 was converted by the Ottoman Bank into a 4 % loan of £ stg. 2,424,240, and this operation was followed by a new 4 % loan called the "Tedjhzat-Askerié," with a capital of £ stg. 2,400,000 secured on the military armament surtax of 6 % on the tithes collected by the Public Debt Administration, and on the Customs to the extent of £ stg. 27,272. This was a German loan, and the contract was signed by Dr. K. Zander, in the name and on account of the Deutsche Bank of Berlin.

In April 1905 the 4 % loan of £ stg. 2,424,240 (originally the 5 % loan of 1901), which had not yet been issued to the public, was increased to £ stg. 4,824,240. (This is a French loan.)

With the exception of the Unification of the Ottoman General Debt in 1903, these are all the financial operations which the Ottoman Treasury has undertaken since 1886.

The Unification is fresh in the minds of the Public. By that operation the Government created a capital of £ stg. 29,762,520 bearing interest at 4 %. The operation was carried out by a *Consortium* of French Bankers, composed of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, the Banque Française pour le Commerce et l'Industrie, and the Comptoir National d'Escompte de Paris. At the beginning, the French *Consortium*, through M. Rouvier, and with the strong support of the French Government, endeavoured to carry the matter through single-handed with the Turks; but the Germans had no intention of allowing this lucrative transaction to be carried out without their approval and consent, and it was only when Mr. Gwinner, of the Deutsche Bank, appeared on the scene that the Turkish opposition, generally supposed to be due to covert Teutonic influence, broke down, and the operation was consummated with the participation of the German group, it is said to the extent of 25 % (some authorities say the German group obtained much more).

From the above and from Table 1, it will be seen that the French *Consortium* and the Ottoman Bank have successfully carried out operations amounting to £17,482,560. The Germans have undertaken operations amounting to £9,205,844, and if we take into consideration the contract prices, the two countries together have paid to the Ottoman Treasury a sum of £20,956,473, and the Ottoman Treasury is indebted to them for the nominal sum of £26,688,404.

How far the bonds have been placed on other markets than French and German, it is impossible to say; but the bulk of the stock has no doubt been taken up in France and Germany.

It may be urged that the Ottoman Bank, which is the prime mover in the French financial operations, is a Franco-English establishment, but the loans have been floated on the French market, and the initiative in all cases has come from Paris. How lucrative the operations have been may be judged from the following Table (No. 2), showing the contract prices and the market prices of to-day; but what I wish to emphasize is, that France and Germany are increasing their stake in this country, and they are drawing the financial bonds tighter and tighter every day; when the

chains of indebtedness become heavier than the debtor can bear, shall we see a recurrence of what happened in Egypt at the time of the Khedive Ismail? The financial methods employed by France and Germany to-day are strangely similar to the methods employed by the French in Egypt at that period.

To-day there is a fresh case in point. The French *Consortium* and the Ottoman Bank are endeavouring to bring about the conversion of the 4 % Priority loan. This loan (originally a 5 % loan concluded under the arrangement of 1881 for the consolidation of the Galata Bankers' claims) was, as already mentioned, converted in 1890. The annuity of £ stg. 391,363 for the payment of 4 % interest and 1 % Sinking Fund is a first charge on the revenues collected by the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, and the loan would in the ordinary course have been paid off in 1932.

By the Supplementary Decree of September 1903. the Imperial Ottoman Government reserves to itself the right to proceed at any time and for its own account to the conversion or repayment of the Priority loan, and, in the case of conversion, the Government has the power to create an amount of bonds of the same description as the Unified Converted Bonds on assigning thereto the annuity of £ stg. 391,363 :— the new bonds to form an integral part of the Unified Converted Debt without distinction of rank or treatment.

In accordance with the above stipulation of the Supplementary Decree, it is now proposed to convert the said loan into bonds of the Unified Converted Debt. The nominal capital outstanding is £ stg. 6,169,240, and as the annuity of £ stg. 391,363 will more than suffice to pay the interest and sinking fund (reduced from 1 % to 0.51 % in order that the new bonds may be extinguished in 1961—that is to say, at the same time as the existing bonds of the Unified Converted Debt)—fresh capital is to be created for a nominal amount of £ stg. 2,500,760. The principal of the new issue will thus be £ stg. 8,670,000. The contract price is 86 %, and the sum reverting to the Government from the transaction does not amount to more than £ stg. 1,272,601, although the payment of the annuity of £ stg. 391,363 will be extended over 54 years instead of 26.

For this operation which is financed by the same French *Consortium* which carried out the Unification, the Germans demanded and obtained a share of 25 % (some say more). The scheme has not yet, however, come to maturity, owing to the opposition of the Grand Vizier and the Sultan himself, who look upon the terms offered as exorbitant, as they would seem to be from the fact that the Unified is quoted to-day at 94.88.

From the information I can gather, it would seem that as far back as 1894 some agreement was come to between the French and Germans for a joint participation in the financial operations of this country. It was agreed that 25 % of all operations should go to the Germans if the French *Consortium* carried out the operation, and *vice versa*. There is another story extant that Mr. Gwinner wished to establish a branch of the Deutsche Bank in Constantinople, and that he only abandoned this project, which would have been prejudicial to the Ottoman Bank, upon an assurance being given by M. Auboyneau, Director-General of the Imperial Ottoman Bank, that the Germans should have a share in all French financial operations; but, whilst this may be true enough, the understanding would seem to date from further back, from the time of Sir Edgar Vincent, then Director-General of the Ottoman Bank. Whatever the date of the agreement may be, it is certain that an agreement of some kind exists.

Both parties make advances to the Government at high rates of interest, and when it is desired to force the Government to accept the terms of a loan operation by either party, the doors of both German and French establishments are closed to further temporary accommodation. The Ottoman Government is therefore obliged in its present penurious condition to accept the usurious terms which are offered. The system adopted by both parties of encouraging the Ottoman Government to create fresh debt to carry on the administration is deplorable. It means the raising of

unproductive capital, and the decrease of the available revenues for the public services. The product of the loans vanishes in a few weeks or months; the revenues are pledged for 50 or 60 years; and, as long as there is no decrease of expenditure and no control over expenses, the financial burden must grow until there will be an internal bankruptcy which will give the two Powers the opportunity they are awaiting.

Now I come to Railways.

In September 1888, a German group obtained the concession of the line from Haidar-Pasha to Angora (the line Haidar-Pasha-Ismidt was up to that time in the hands of an English group). The distance is 578 kilometres, and the guarantee was frs. 10,300 per kilometre for the Haidar-Pasha-Ismidt section and frs. 15,000 for the Ismidt-Angora section. The tithes of the districts traversed by the railway (Ismidt, Ertogroul, Kutahia and Angora) were assigned in payment of the kilometric guarantee. The average of tithes assigned for the last two years is £ stg. 200,399, and the amount paid in kilometric guarantees (average of 5 years) is £ stg. 48,691. The Public Debt Administration is charged with the collection of the revenues.

In 1893, the same group obtained the concession for the extension of the line from Eski-Shehr to Konia—a distance of 445 kilometres. The kilometric guarantee is frs. 13,727, the payment of which is so arranged that the Government cannot be called upon to provide more than frs. 6,740 per kilometre.* The tithes of the provinces of Trebizond and Gumuchané, which are collected by the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, were assigned in payment of the guarantee, and the Company has a lien also on the surplus of the tithes collected for the guarantee of the Haidar-Pasha-Angora section of the line. The average of tithes assigned for the last 2 years is £ stg. 53,091, and the amount paid for kilometric guarantees (average of 5 years) is £ stg. 116,276.

In 1890, a German group at the head of which was Mr. Alfred Kaulla, obtained the concession for 99 years of the Railway from Salonica to Monastir. The length of this line is 219 kilometres, and the guarantee of frs. 14,300 per kilometre is secured on the tithes of the Provinces of Salonica and Monastir, the collection of which is intrusted to the care of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. The average of the tithes assigned for the last 2 years is £ stg. 152,132. The amount paid for kilometric guarantees (average of 5 years) is £ stg. 52,165.

The Salonica-Constantinople Junction Railway is a French Company. The concession for 99 years was obtained in 1892 by M. R. Baudouy, acting for and on behalf of a French group. The length of the line is 510½ kilometres and the tithes of the provinces of Dedeagatch, Gumuldjina, Serres and Drama, are assigned by the Government in payment of the guarantee of frs. 15,500 per kilometre. The average of the tithes assigned for the last 2 years is £ stg. 132,296, and the amount paid for kilometric guarantees (average of 5 years) is £ stg. 234,937. The collection of these tithes is in the hands of the Public Debt Administration.

In 1893, M. Georges Nagelmackers obtained from the Ottoman Government the concession for 99 years of the Smyrna-Cassaba-Alashehr Railway, which had originally been in the hands of an English Company, as well as the concession for the same period of the line from Alashehr to Afioun-Karahissar. M. Georges Nagelmackers, in 1894, transferred his rights to a French Company which had been formed in Paris. The length of the Smyrna-Cassaba-Alashehr line is 266 kilometres, and the Government grants an absolute annuity of frs. 2,310,000. As regards the extension from Alashehr to Afioun-Karahissar, a distance of 251 kilometres, the Government assigns the tithes of the Provinces of Aidin, Denizli and Saroukhan, which are in the hands of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, in payment of the guarantee, which is frs. 18,880 per kilometre. The average of the tithes assigned for the last 2 years is £ stg. 109,702 and the amount paid for kilometric guarantees (average of 5 years) is £ stg. 145,924.

*If the Aidin Railway extension is granted the Germans will demand the former figure. [A.P.]

In the same year (1893) a French Company, which had been working the railway from Beyrouth to Damascus and from Damascus to M'Zerib in the Hauran District, applied for and obtained the concession of a branch line from Rayak to Biredjik, and eventually to Telek on the Euphrates. For reasons which it is here unnecessary to dilate on, the Company, now known as the "Société Ottomane des Chemins de Fer Damas-Hamah et prolongements," was not allowed at first to carry out the construction of the Railway further than a point called Hamah—a distance of 188 kilometres from Rayak—and it was only in 1905 that the Company was authorised to extend the line to Aleppo (140 kilometres), where it will form a junction with the Baghdad Railway.

The Rayak-Hamah section enjoys a guarantee of frs. 15,000 per kilometre, and the Hamah-Aleppo section one of frs. 13,600 per kilometre. The payment of these sums is secured on the tithes of the provinces of Damascus, Hamah, and Aghiah, the collection of which is entrusted to the care of the Administration of the Ottoman Public Debt. The average of the tithes assigned for the last 2 years in payment of the Rayak-Hamah section is £ stg. 116,717, and the amount paid for kilometric guarantees (average of 5 years) is £ stg. 61,844.

In 1902, a concession for 99 years was granted to the German group (Deutsche Bank) working the Anatolian Railway for a line from Konia to Baghdad. The distance is 2,000 kilometres, split up into sections of 200 kilometres:—the first section from Konia to Eregli having been opened to traffic in 1905. The Government in consideration of a loan of frs. 54,000,000, granted by the Deutsche Bank for the purpose of constructing the first section of the line, guarantees to the Company an annuity of frs. 11,000 for each kilometre constructed, and a sum of frs. 4,500 per kilometre for working expenses, in all frs. 15,500 per kilometre. The payment of the sum of frs. 11,000 is made out of the proceeds of the tithes of the Provinces of Konia, Aleppo, and Ourfa, the collection of which is in the hands of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration. Since the completion of the first section of the line in 1905, the Government has paid to the Baghdad Railway Company the sum of £ stg. 26,863 for working expenses.

During the negotiations for the Baghdad loan 1st series, the French claimed a participation, and obtained it—40 % is the amount. M. Delcassé would not allow the loan to be quoted on the Paris market, and the French financial establishments merely subscribed to the loan and took their profits. But Commandant Berger, President at that time of the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, told me that if M. Delcassé fell, the French would again participate, as M. Rouvier and the French Consortium were determined to have a share in the enterprise. M. Auboyneau, Director-General of the Imperial Ottoman Bank in Paris, admitted to me in January last that the French financial world desired to join in the Railway, and that even if England did not participate, France eventually would.

From Table No. 3 it will be seen that the 2 countries possess 2,657 kilometres of railway open to traffic, and that £ stg. 828,210 is furnished by the taxpayer to keep them going.

It means that the 2 countries have an ever-increasing stake in Turkey, and the two are not averse to increasing the stake conjointly.

In the meantime, in spite of the Anglo-French *entente*, England and English finance is left out in the cold. When it is too late we shall bestir ourselves to counteract the preponderating economic influence of the 2 countries, as we seem to have done with the German Baghdad Railway, in which we only took an interest when the concession was given to the Germans. As I said in my Annual Report of 1904, quoting from Captain Mahan:—"Local, commercial,"—to which I add "financial"—"interests now underlie political and military influences and control. England seems to be liquidating her holding in the Near East. I only hope that we shall not find out when it is too late that we are mistaken."

It is a truism that no business can stand still: it must progress or decline: and it

is the same with financial and industrial enterprises. Whilst others are going forward England is going back.

At any rate let us open our eyes to the facts. If we take into consideration the ever-increasing influence of France and Germany in finance and Railway enterprise; if we take also into consideration the rapid and successful extension of French and German industrial enterprises (Docks, Quays, Tramways, &c.), all of which is due just as much to the pushing methods and adaptable policy of the promoters thereof as to the unvarying and undisguised direct diplomatic intervention and support of their respective Ambassadors and official Agents; it is evident that the 2 countries are tightening, and intend to tighten, their economic hold on this country until, as Sir Edward Grey is reported to have said of Persia :—" The integrity which we are always talking of respecting will no longer be there to respect."

The national credit of Turkey, thanks to the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, is still good; but nevertheless, swiftly and surely, the borrowing power of the Treasury is becoming more and more impaired. Control seems to me in face of the excessive expenditure and reckless borrowing of the present régime to be the only remedy, and we are within measurable distance of it. It would appear to-day that when the moment arrives the Powers interested will in the defence of the holders of Turkish stock and of the Railways they control, be obliged, whether they desire it or not, to take measures for creating order out of the financial chaos in which the Turkish Government is inextricably involved. Apart from the fact that English Houses have no share in the profits of these operations and undertakings, they will have no interest to speak of to protect in comparison with the French and Germans, who are laying an economic foundation on which they will later be able to build a political edifice.

I annex also a Table (No. 4) showing the amount of capital in the case of each Railway, and the market price of the bonds, with the interest paid on the quoted value of the share.

Constantinople, June 18, 1906.

Enclosure 2 in No. 147.

TABLES showing the French and German Loans and Amount of Capital in each Railway.

No. 1.

FRENCH LOANS.

GERMAN LOANS.

Loans.	Nominal Capital.	New Capital created.	Contract Price.	Amount received by the Government.	Loans.	Nominal Capital.	New Capital created.	Contract Price.	Amount received by the Government.
	£ stg.	£ stg.	Per cent.	£ stg.		£ stg.	£ stg.	Per cent.	£ stg.
4 per Cent. Priority Conversion, 1890 ...	7,827,240	1,985,980	75	1,489,485	5 per Cent. Fisheries, 1888	1,500,000	1,500,000	70	1,050,000
4 per Cent. Osmanieh, 1890 ...	4,545,000	4,545,000	76	3,454,200	4 per Cent. Railway Loan, 1894 ...	1,600,000	1,600,000	73.50	1,176,000
5 per Cent., 1896 ...	2,975,200	2,975,200	84	2,499,168	4 per Cent. Fisheries, 1903 (Conversion) ...	2,400,000	1,545,844	80	1,236,675
1901 } 4 per Cent., 1901-1905	4,824,240	4,824,240	81.01	3,908,116	Bagdad Railway, 1903 ...	2,160,000	2,160,000	81.50	1,760,400
1903 } 4 per Cent. Customs, 1902	7,818,200	3,152,140	78.50	2,474,429	Tedjizat-Askerie, 1905 ...	2,400,000	2,400,000	79.50	1,908,000
1905 } (Conversion) ...		(Not yet issued, but an advance has been made of £ T. 1,100,000)							
4 per Cent., 1904 [sic] ...	2,500,000		...	...			
Total ...	...	17,482,560	...	13,825,398	Total ...	...	9,205,844	...	7,131,075

FRENCH LOANS.

GERMAN LOANS.

Loan.	Contract Price.	Market Price of to-day (francs).	Loan.	Contract Price.	Market Price of to-day (francs).
4 per Cent. Priority Conversion, 1890	Per cent. 75	Per cent. 103·40	5 per Cent. Fisheries, 1888	Per cent. 70	Per cent. (Converted in 1903)
4 per Cent. Osmanieh, 1890	76	96·00	4 per Cent. Railway Loan, 1894	73·50	100·40
5 per Cent., 1896	84	106·10	4 per Cent. Fisheries, 1903	80·00	89·00
1901 } 1901-1905 Loan	81·01	95·30	Bagdad Railway Loan, 4 per Cent., 1903	81·50	89·00
1903 } 1905	78·50	99·60	Tedjiziat Askerié 4 per Cent., 1905	79·50	87·50
4 per Cent. Customs, 1902	78·50	(Not issued)			
4 per Cent. Customs, 1904	78·50				

GUARANTEED FRENCH RAILWAYS.

GUARANTEED GERMAN RAILWAYS.

Name.	Length of Line.	Amount of Tythes assigned.	Name.	Length of Line open to Traffic.	Amount of Tythes assigned.
1892. Salonica-Constantinople Junction	Kilom. 510·589	£ T. 157,779	1888. Haidar-Pacha and Angora	Kilom. 577·504	£ T. 243,165
1893. Smyrna-Casaba and extension	518	124,541	1893. Eski-Shehr-Konia	445	59,574
1891. Rayak-Hamah	188	145,022	1903. Bagdad Railway Company	200	—
Total	1,216·589	427,342	1890. Salonica-Monastir	219·2	180,951
			Total	1,441	483,690

No. 4.

FRENCH GUARANTEED RAILWAYS.

Railway Company.	Capital.		Nominal Value.		Interest on Bonds.	Last Dividend paid.	Market Price of Bonds. frs.	Yield according to the Market Prices. frs.	Observations.
	Share Capital.	Bonds.	Shares.	4 % Bonds.					
Smyna-Cassaba (1894, old line) ...	Frans.	Frans.	Frans.	Frans.	Per cent.	25 fr. * = 5 per cent.	Frans.	Per cent.	* 20 fr. of which represented interest at 4 per cent., and 5 fr. dividend.
Smyna-Cassaba, 1895 (Extension) ...	...	56,560,000	...	500	4		480	4.16	
Salonica-Constantinople Junction ...	16,000,000	70,000,000	500	500	4	10 fr. = 2 per cent.	454	4.40	† Market price of new bonds not yet known.
Damas-Hamah and Extension—	15,000,000	155,000,000	500	500	3		344	4.36	
"Rayak-Hamah" ...	15,000,000	45,000,000	...	500	4	4.96 fr. = 1 percent.	510	3.92	
Hamah-Aleppo ...		42,500,000	500	500	4		...	...
Total ...	46,000,000	369,060,000							

No. 4.

GERMAN GUARANTEED RAILWAYS.

Railway Company.	Capital.		Nominal Value.		Interest on Bonds.	Market Price.	Last Dividend Paid.	Market Price of Bonds.	Yield according to the Market Price.	Observations.
	Share Capital.	Bonds.	Shares.	Bonds.						
Haidar-Pacha-Angora	Francs. 60,000,000	Francs. 160,000,000	Francs. 500 = 408 mks. (60 per cent. fully paid)	Francs. 500	Per cent. 5	134 mks.	14.69 mks. (18 fr.) = 3 per cent.	Marks. (1) 103.80 (2) 102.90	Per cent. 4.91 4.86	Of which— 90,000 shares (Series 1) for the Haidar-Pacha-Angora line. 30,000 shares (Series 2) for the Eski-Shehr-Konia. 160,000 debentures (Series 1) Haidar-Pacha-Angora. 160,000 debentures (Series 2) Eski-Shehr-Konia.
Eski-Shehr-Konia	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Salonica-Monastir	20,000,000	60,000,000	500	500	3	Unknown	12.50 fr. = 2.5 per cent.	66	4.55	
Bagdad Railway Loan (1st Series)	15,000,000 (50 per cent. fully paid)	54,000,000	500	500	4	"	...	89	4.50	
Total	95,000,000	274,000,000								

No. 148.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/129.

(No. 333.) Very Confidential.

Berlin, D. October 29, 1906.

Sir,

R. November 5, 1906.

....⁽¹⁾ There was one question which Monsieur Isvolsky considered should at once engage the attention of the great Powers, and that was the reform of the Judiciary in Macedonia. He had not yet heard whether the Sultan had agreed to the conditions contained in the last Note presented by the Ambassadors at Constantinople on the subject of the increase of the Customs Duties. He had, however, little doubt that he would do so, and that sufficient money would then be found to defray the expenses of the Administration. He considered it essential that the judicial reform should then be undertaken, and he believed that if this were done, the Civil Agents and the Financial Commission would be able to effect a real improvement in the condition of the country. He did not anticipate any immediate complications in the Balkans, such as would undoubtedly have broken out if the Powers had permitted the annexation of Crete by Greece. The Bulgarians would in that case certainly have demanded some territorial compensation and would have resorted to force, had it been denied them. I said that it appeared to me that this demand of the Bulgarians was unreasonable, as none of the other Balkan States had received compensation when Eastern Roumelia was united to Bulgaria. Monsieur Isvolsky smiled and said that this took place so long ago that people had forgotten all about it. I asked whether he thought that there would be danger of complications arising in the event of the death of the Sultan. He replied that he did not see any reason for alarm, and he thought that the Sultan's successor would be allowed to take peaceful possession of the throne. He had been glad to hear that the Sultan had recovered his health, and that his illness had not been so severe as had been generally supposed. In his opinion a more serious situation would be created if the Emperor of Austria were to disappear from the scene. As long as His Majesty lived, it was not probable that there would be any serious trouble in his dominions, and the demand of the Hungarians for separation from Austria would not probably take effect during His Majesty's lifetime, which it was earnestly to be hoped might be prolonged for many years. . . .⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

FRANK C. LASCELLES.

⁽¹⁾ [The rest of this long despatch deals with Russian foreign relations in Persia and elsewhere, and will be published in full in *Gooch & Temperley*, Vol. IV.]

No. 149.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/157.

(No. 548.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 12, 1906.

I told Count Benckendorff to-day of my conversation with Count Mensdorff with regard to Macedonia, and impressed upon him that the news from Macedonia was getting worse instead of better, and that, while we thought the first thing to be done after the Customs question was settled would be to make the fullest use of the powers which would then be conferred upon the Financial Commission and the Gendarmerie, we should be prepared to give our strenuous support to still further proposals which might seem advisable and which would secure the consent of all the Powers, this consent being a necessary condition.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/157.

(No. 216.) Very Confidential.

Vienna, D. December 25, 1906.

Sir,

R. December 31, 1906.

The French Ambassador spoke to me to-day about the question of Judicial Reforms in Macedonia. He said that on the last occasion when he had seen Baron d'Aehrenthal he had mooted the question of Judicial Reforms and asked what course the Austro-Hungarian Government proposed to pursue. His Excellency had replied that he was in entire accord with the views of Count Goluchowski on this subject—namely that the elaboration of the Judicial Reforms should be the work of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments and that their application should be entrusted to the Civil Agents of the two Governments. In the matter of the Financial control of the Macedonian Budget they had yielded to the wishes of the other Powers, and, in view of the large interests involved in which the other Powers were concerned, there had been some justification for the concessions demanded. The Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments were, however, not inclined to go further in the way of such concessions and it was their firm intention to do all in their power to abide by the Mürzsteg Agreement and carry out the judicial Reforms alone.

His Excellency's language was, Monsieur de Reverseaux informed me, very decided on this point.

The Russian Ambassador who has just returned from leave of absence was, the French Ambassador told me, equally firm in his language. He had said that he had talked the matter over with Count Goluchowski just before the latter's retirement from office, and that he had entirely agreed with His Excellency's opinion, namely that the Judicial Reforms should be exclusively the work of the Civil Agents and that the appointment of the Financial Commission should be the limit of their departure from the Mürzsteg arrangement. As far as he was concerned, the Russian Ambassador had added, these were personal opinions, and as yet he had received no definite instructions on the subject from his Government.

I have very cautiously sounded the Italian Ambassador as to the opinion of his Government in this matter. Although His Excellency has just returned from Rome I could not gather anything stronger than an opinion that the Italian Government were in favour of the judicial reforms being undertaken by all the Powers and not by the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments alone.

I should mention that the Marquis de Reverseaux informed me that he had heard that the Italian Ambassador in London had spoken very strongly to you on this matter, but that a correspondent in Italy, who had every opportunity of knowing, had written to him that the Marquis di San Giuliano had perhaps gone a little beyond his instructions in the language which he was reported to have held.

Since writing the above I have myself received a visit from my Russian colleague, Prince Ourousoff. In the course of conversation he gave me his views respecting Macedonia and, as he recently saw Monsieur Isvolsky in Paris, I presume that his opinions on the subject fairly represent those of the Russian Government. His language to me differed in many points from that which he used to the Marquis de Reverseaux, although the gist of it is the same, namely, that the Russian Government would prefer to see the judicial reforms in Macedonia entrusted to the two Powers alone. He alluded to his conversation with Count Goluchowski and described it in much the same terms as he had used in speaking to the French Ambassador; but he said that he had not found Baron d'Aehrenthal so opinionated on the subject as his predecessor. Baron d'Aehrenthal had in fact told him that he certainly preferred that the two Powers should continue to carry out the Agreement of Mürzsteg, and undertake alone the elaboration and application of the judicial reforms, but that as there appeared to be a divergence of opinions on the subject, he would, for his part, be quite ready to hear the views of those who did not agree with

him and give them his best consideration. His Excellency had added that there was no chance of doing anything with regard to judicial reforms until the spring, and that therefore, there would be ample time to discuss the matter with other Powers and, he hoped, come to an agreement on the subject.

Prince Ourousoff then proceeded to discuss the general question of Macedonia and the reforms. He said that in Russia they were not so particularly devoted to the Müritz Agreement, and he could not say but that it would be with some feeling of relief that they would retire from a mandate which gave them an infinity of trouble and responsibility and gained them but little thanks. But still there was no desire to shirk the responsibility, and, in fact, the serious position of affairs in Macedonia precluded such action, unless they were forced to it. It had been Count Goluchowski's opinion that if the other Powers insisted upon the judicial reforms being handed over to the financial Commission, the two Powers should tear up the Müritz Agreement with its disinterested clauses, and wash their hands of all responsibility for the fate of the reforms and the future of Macedonia. He,—and, he believed, Baron d'Aehrenthal to be of the same opinion—thought that the state of affairs in Macedonia was too grave to admit of bickering and manoeuvring amongst the European Powers. It was to the interest of all of them that a better state of things should reign in Macedonia, and the sole question was how that end could be best attained. It was said that the progress of reforms under the Müritz Agreement had been slow; but would more progress have been made under all the Powers combined? History and experience showed that the answer must be in the negative. The Dual Mandate might be open to criticism; but to replace it by that ancient failure, the Concert of Europe, would be to adopt a course still more open to criticism and would moreover be playing absolutely into the hands of the Sultan. Finally he said that if His Majesty's Government were in favour of entrusting the judicial reforms to the financial Commission, and he had heard that they were, he could understand, though he hardly agreed with, their views. He attributed however the action of Italy to less comprehensible motives, namely to megalomania and intense jealousy of Austria.

Owing to Baron d'Aehrenthal's absence in Buda-Pesth I have not yet had an opportunity of learning his views on this subject at first hand.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 151.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/375.

(No. 832.) Confidential.

Sir,

Pera, D. December 31, 1906.

R. January 7, 1907.

In my despatch No. 813 of the 19th instant I informed you that I proposed to consult further with Colonel Elliot and Mr. Harvey whom I had asked to come to Constantinople with a view to submitting to His Majesty's Government less drastic proposals for further reforms in Macedonia than those forwarded in my above-mentioned despatch. I now have the honour to report that Mr. Harvey who found himself unable to come to Constantinople in consequence of work connected with the budget has now prepared conjointly with Mr. Consul-General Graves the inclosed scheme of judicial reform⁽¹⁾ extending the powers of the Financial Commission to the supervision of the Administration of Justice and of the prisons in the three Vilayets by means of Turkish Inspectors reporting to the Commission.

It will be seen from Mr. Graves' and Mr. Harvey's covering despatches also inclosed⁽¹⁾ that they do not expect their scheme to be productive of much amelioration

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

in the general situation. How far the scheme would result in any real improvement of the judiciary must depend in large measure on the character and ability of the Inspectors—and good men would be harder to get than in the case of the Financial Inspectors—and on the Civil Agents who with the Turkish members of the Financial Commission and the German Delegate could always outvote their other foreign colleagues. Unfortunately the attitude of the Civil Agents in the past both as members of the Financial Commission and in the administrative field has not been such as to inspire any very confident hope for the future.

I do not know however that a better scheme of judicial Reform could be devised with any chance of being accepted by the Powers, but if it is pressed upon the Porte His Majesty's Government should, I think, be prepared to encounter little less opposition from the Turkish Government than was the case when the Financial Commission was first instituted. It is true that it is not the establishment of an International Authority that is now in question but only the extension of the powers of one already in existence, but in present conditions, the judiciary in Macedonia is, as pointed out by Mr. Graves and Mr. Harvey, a political instrument of great power and value to the executive and the attempt to apply to it any considerable measure of foreign control is likely to meet with stubborn resistance from the Ottoman Government. On the other hand without some foreign supervision no substantial improvement can be expected. I have seen it suggested that some amelioration might be effected through the Budget by the Financial Commission with its present powers, but though the raising of the Judges' salaries is very desirable, I do not think that by itself it would produce any real improvement in the Administration of Justice. What is needed is control by which the judges will be forced to do justice in spite of orders from high Authorities and in spite of political and racial prejudices. As Mr. Harvey has expressed it to me: "You might double the salaries all round to-morrow and double or halve the staffs of the Courts without in the least improving a Bulgarian's chance of obtaining justice if it be to the interest of the executive that he should not obtain it."

It will be observed that at the end of Mr. Graves' and Mr. Harvey's Memorandum it is suggested that the European Gendarmerie officers should be given powers of supervision over the prisons and access to the prison registers. I believe that Colonel Elliot and his foreign colleagues would welcome this addition to their powers, and that such an arrangement might perhaps be logically included in a scheme of judicial reform, but to the Turkish Administration the foreign Gendarmerie officers are the most unwelcome of the different foreign agents of reform and the inclusion in any scheme of an extension of their functions would alone suffice to provoke the most obstinate opposition.

I inclose also in their despatch copy of a despatch from Colonel Elliot⁽²⁾ in which he suggests certain further reforms specially affecting the gendarmerie (1) reduction and concentration of the troops and their policing work to be given over to a mobile corps of the gendarmerie. (2) executive powers to be given to the foreign officers. (3) the police to be merged into the gendarmerie, and the prisoners to be under the latter. (4) the gendarmerie to be increased. (5) and to be freed from the obstruction it is now encountering in its work. The last two points are included among the desiderata (see points 2 and 11) enumerated in the Memorandum prepared by the foreign staff officers which is now receiving the consideration of the six Embassies (inclosure in my despatch No. 808 of the 17th instant). Of the first three of Colonel Elliot's suggestions, the third, *i.e.*, the merging of the police with the gendarmerie and the placing of the prisons in charge of the latter would perhaps be the least difficult of realization but the police is such a potent instrument in the hands of the Authorities and the reorganized gendarmerie is an institution so unpalatable in the highest quarters that I have little hope that this reform could be effected with merely diplomatic pressure. The same applies *a fortiori*

(2) [Not reproduced.]

to the two remaining suggestions of Colonel Elliot—the most effectual of the proposed reforms—*i.e.*, the grant of executive powers to the foreign officers, and the reduction and concentration of the troops and the establishment of a mobile corps of gendarmerie. The latter of these measures would, moreover, I presume, involve some guarantee of security of frontier from the Powers.

I have, &c.

G. BARCLAY.

III. THE SINAI BOUNDARY DISPUTE AND THE BRITISH NAVAL DEMONSTRATION, 1906.

[*ED. NOTE.*—A blue book was published on the question of the Sinai Boundary and the British Naval demonstration which was required to induce the Porte to accept the British demand. All the relevant papers are published in *Cd.* 3006, together with a map illustrating the disputed area. *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, pp. 645–686. It has been thought convenient here to reproduce the summary from the Annual Report for Turkey of 1906.]

Extract from Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1906. (By G. H. Fitzmaurice.)

(Enclosure in Despatch from Mr. G. Barclay. No. 43 of January 18, 1907.

R. February 11, 1907.)

F.O. 371/345.

The earlier phases of the Sinai boundary question are fully summarized in Sir N. R. O'Connor's despatch No. 307 of the 3rd May,⁽¹⁾ so that it is unnecessary in this Memorandum to give more than a brief outline of what occurred down to the presentation to the Porte of the ultimatum of the 3rd May. The attention of the Embassy was first drawn officially to the question of the frontier by a message received from the Sultan complaining that an English officer, Bramley Bey, in command of a force of Egyptian troops, had pitched his camp at a place close to Akaba, on the Gaza road, and had announced his intention of erecting a guard-house there, as well as at other points within Turkish territory. The Sultan begged the Ambassador to take steps to insure the withdrawal of this force from the position which it had occupied beyond the limits of Egyptian territory. The Sultan's message was undoubtedly due to the exaggerated reports from Egypt, representing the dispatch of Bramley Bey with a few soldiers to inspect and occupy some of the positions on the Egyptian side of the frontier as an encroachment on Turkish territory, although it was explained to the Porte that the object of Bramley Bey's mission was to discuss in a friendly manner with the local Turkish authorities the exact position of certain places on the boundary which had never been accurately defined. A similar complaint was addressed by the Grand Vizier to the Government of the Khedive with a request for explanations. The Khedive replied denying that there had been any trespass on Ottoman territory, and urging that a Turkish Commissioner should be appointed to discuss the question of a proper delimitation of the Turco-Egyptian frontier, and endeavour to settle the matter with a Delegate named by the Egyptian Government. The Ottoman Government rejected this proposal, and the Grand Vizier replied to the Khedive that the Sublime Porte would not name a Delegate, as there was no question of frontier involved, but merely an encroachment on Ottoman territory, which could not be tolerated. Meanwhile, an Egyptian coastguard cruiser had been prevented from landing men at Taba by Turkish troops occupying that place. His Majesty's Government protested against the occupation of a place unquestionably within the Sinai Peninsula, and pointed out to the Porte that if any doubt existed as to the frontier line, a Joint Delimitation Commission was the best solution of the question. Eventually the Sultan dispatched two Staff Officers to Cairo to inquire into the question. On arrival at Cairo they held no communication with any Member of the Egyptian Government, or with Lord Cromer. Their inquiry was purely of a

(¹) [Published *A. & P.* (1906), CXXXVII, (*Cd.* 3006), pp. 652–6.]

unilateral character, and, after proceeding to Akaba, they reported on the 2nd April that Taba was not Egyptian territory, and, consequently, there was no need to withdraw the Turkish forces. Their report was referred to Muktar Pasha with instructions to discuss the matter with the Khedive. Muktar Pasha proceeded to advance the pretension that the Sinai Peninsula consisted only of the territory lying south of a line drawn from Akaba to Suez, and the boundaries of Egypt were lines drawn from Rafeh to Suez and from Suez to Akaba. The Khedive in reply referred to the famous telegram from Jevad Pasha, the then Grand Vizier, of the 8th April, 1892. Of this telegram it need only here be said that it was sent to the Khedive, at the demand of Lord Cromer, in order to explain Abbas Hilmi's Firman of Investiture, the wording of which was not regarded as satisfactory by His Majesty's Government. By the telegram the administration of the Sinai Peninsula was confided to Egypt in the same manner as it had been administered by Abbas Hilmi's predecessors. It did not specify the limits of the Sinai Peninsula; but Lord Cromer's note of the 13th April, 1892, to Tigrane Pasha, taking act of the communication of the telegram, left no doubt that the Peninsula was to be regarded as extending from the neighbourhood of El Arish to the head of the Gulf of Akaba. Lord Cromer's note was published in the Egyptian "Official Gazette" at the time. In referring to this telegram, the Khedive suggested that it should be taken as the basis of a settlement—that the frontier line should run from Rafeh to Akaba, joining the coast 3 miles west of Akaba, and that the remainder of the line should be demarcated by competent surveyors. The Grand Vizier, in his reply to the Khedive, maintained that the Gulf of Akaba and the Sinai Peninsula were outside the territory defined in the Imperial Firman; that the telegram of the 8th April, 1892, only referred to the western side of the Sinai Peninsula; and that the interpretation of that telegram was a matter which only concerned the Ottoman Government. This message was of such a character as to preclude a reply from the Khedive, or, indeed, any possibility of continuing the negotiations at Cairo. There was no longer any doubt that the Ottoman Government were trifling with His Majesty's Government, and on the 30th April Sir N. R. O'Connor was instructed to present a note to the Porte requiring the Ottoman Government to comply within ten days with the demands of His Majesty's Government for the evacuation of Taba by the Turkish troops, and the delimitation of the Turco-Egyptian boundary of the Sinai Peninsula—from Rafeh to the head of the Gulf of Akaba—on the basis of Jevad Pasha's telegram of the 8th April, 1892.

This note was presented on the 3rd May. During the following few days some informal councils of Ministers were held at the Palace. The French and Russian Ambassadors, under instructions from their Governments, advised the Porte to agree to the British demands, and the Mediterranean fleet moved to the Piræus, it being also arranged to send ships to Suez, Port Saïd, and Alexandria. On the other hand, it was reported that a Turkish force had destroyed the pillars marking the Egyptian boundary at Rafeh and camped within Egyptian limits. His Majesty's ship "Minerva" was dispatched from Port Saïd to investigate the incident, and the Commander, on attempting to land at Rafeh, was warned off and treated with incivility by the Officer in Command of the Turkish detachment. On the 8th May, the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent word to say that he would call in the afternoon, but later postponed his visit, as no decision had been arrived at. On the same day the Grand Vizier tried, but in vain, to induce the Khedive to reopen direct negotiations with the Porte. On the 10th May the Minister for Foreign Affairs called at the Embassy with proposals involving the evacuation of Taba and the maintenance of the *status quo* without delimitation. He was told that this was insufficient, and that nothing short of an official acceptance in writing of the British Government's demands would be satisfactory. The same day Nedjib Pasha visited the Ambassador, and on behalf of the Sultan asked for a declaration from His Majesty's Government that it respected the Sultan's suzerainty over Egypt and the Imperial Firmans. Sir N. O'Connor replied that His Majesty's Government had not disputed the Sultan's

suzerain rights, and that it was the Porte which had violated existing Agreements. On the 11th May the Admiral telegraphed that the necessary arrangements had been made :—

1. To occupy Mitylene, Lemnos, Imbros, Samothrace, and Thasos ;
2. Rhodes and Chios ; and
3. To stop all Turkish transports in the Mediterranean outside the limits of the Suez Canal.

On the same day, Tewfik Pasha sent a written reply to the Embassy's note, to the effect that Taba had been occupied solely to preserve the *status quo*, and to prevent the erection there by the Egyptians of guard-houses, &c. ; but that, in view of the formal assurances that no such intentions existed, the Ottoman Government had decided to withdraw its troops. To this Sir N. R. O'Connor replied on the 12th May, expressing his regret that the Imperial Government should in an official communication ignore the provisions of Jevad Pasha's telegram of 1892, or should question the Khedive's right to occupy a place in the Sinai Peninsula within which Taba is indisputably situated. and declaring that "it was more than ever necessary to have a formal delimitation of the boundary of the Peninsula, based on a line running from Rafeh approximately straight in a south-easterly direction to the head of the Gulf of Akaba, a definite assurance being therefore required from the Ottoman Government that this boundary will be surveyed and fixed by a Joint Commission appointed by the Imperial Government and the Khedive, and marked on a map prepared by the Joint Commissioners."

Late in the evening the Grand Vizier, accompanied by Nedjib Pasha, called on the Ambassador, and declared that Taba would be evacuated and the *status quo* completely restored, but that demarcation was unnecessary and inexpedient between what were practically two portions of the same Empire. He received the same reply as that given to Tewfik Pasha. During the night the Grand Vizier telegraphed to Muktar Pasha, instructing him to see the Khedive and endeavour to settle the matter direct with His Highness. Lord Cromer insisted on the Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs being present at the interview and on the Khedive's replying to the Grand Vizier that no solution would be acceptable which did not trace the frontier from Rafeh to Akaba in an approximately straight line. The Khedive telegraphed a reply in this sense on the 13th May.

On the same day Musurus Pasha, in London, repeated to Sir E. Grey the language used by the Grand Vizier in his interview with Sir N. R. O'Connor. The Turkish Ambassador was informed that everything depended on an official reply from the Porte explicitly accepting the line from Rafeh to the head of the Gulf of Akaba ; that we could not tolerate attempts to ignore our position in Egypt ; that the British Government had never failed to recognize the Sultan's suzerainty over Egypt, but that if this was regarded as incompatible with the British occupation and our right to intervene in Egyptian affairs, our whole force would be used to uphold our position ; we did not intend to make this incompatible with the Sultan's suzerainty, unless he himself made it so. Sir N. R. O'Connor was instructed to use the same language to the Grand Vizier.

In the forenoon of the same day, the 13th May, a functionary from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs left at the Embassy another note, which still fell short of a complete acceptance of the conditions formulated in our note, and the Ambassador sent it back by the hands of his dragoman, who found the Ministers assembled at their usual Sunday council at the Porte. The Grand Vizier telegraphed to the Palace and hastily summoned the Ministers specially deputed by the Sultan to deal with the matter. After examination of the Egyptian Firmans and prolonged discussion, in which the Embassy dragoman(?) participated, they came to the conclusion that the utmost they could ask the Sultan to adopt was the evacuation of Taba, &c., and a veiled

form of delimitation on the basis of an approximately straight line from near the head of the Gulf of Akaba, to a *point east of El Arish* on the Mediterranean or "to the point on the Mediterranean fixed by Imperial Firman, and the map accompanying it as the limit of Egyptian territory," it being left to the Commissioners to determine the point in question. Rafah was not mentioned in the Firman of 1841 nor shown on any map in the possession of the Porte, and consequently they dared not, they said, specifically mention it in their official "mazbata" or Ministerial recommendation to the Sultan, although the Embassy dragoman,⁽²⁾ on behalf of the Ambassador, pointed out that its omission was tantamount to a more than partial rejection of the British demands, as the Commission without maps or Firmans could not possibly determine a point which the Porte was unable to fix. He added that an Iradé based on such a Ministerial decision would not avert on the morrow the untoward consequences that were almost certain to follow on a refusal of our demands. The decision of the Ministers was dispatched to the Palace, with the result that the Sultan immediately issued an Iradé based on their recommendations, and at 8 P.M. (*i.e.*, some hours after the expiry of the ten days' limit) a further note from the Minister of Foreign Affairs in the above sense was received at the Embassy. Sir N. R. O'Connor almost at once proceeded to Tewfik Pasha's house, returned the note, read to the Minister the statement of Sir E. Grey, and insisted on his writing at once to the Grand Vizier, pointing out the absolute necessity of making specific mention of Rafah as the point of departure on the Mediterranean, and of "a point at least 3 miles from Akaba," as the terminal point on the Gulf of Akaba. The Ambassador then visited the Grand Vizier, who eventually promised to do his utmost to have a completely satisfactory note sent to the Embassy by 11 A.M. on the following day, the 14th May, so that its contents might be telegraphed to London before the meeting of the Cabinet to take place that day.

During the night the Grand Vizier communicated with the Sultan, assembled the Ministers at his house, and early in the morning proceeded himself to the Palace, where in an audience he laid before His Majesty a further Ministerial report on the situation. The Sultan, however, still refused to accept Rafah unless it was found to be marked on some authorized Government map. Aides-de-camp were sent to the Ministry of War to bring the Chief of the Staff and all available authorized maps, but Rafah was not found on any one of them, and the Sultan accordingly refused to accept it as the limit of Egyptian territory on the Mediterranean, suspiciously remarking that by "Rafah" perhaps the English meant "Jaffa" up to which point it was desired to extend the boundary. His Majesty only finally issued his Iradé on the Grand Vizier's giving a written undertaking that "Rafah" was not "Jaffa," and that though not specifically mentioned in the Firmans, it was implied, as it was the most eastern point of the district of El Arish, which, according to the Firman of 1841, formed the eastern limit of the Vilayet of Egypt.

Before midday a note was received signifying the Porte's complete acceptance of the British demands, and instructions were telegraphed by the Grand Vizier to the two Staff Officers at Akaba to delimit the boundary of the Sinai Peninsula in conjunction with Delegates to be appointed by the Khedive. The latter was telegraphically informed of the result and invited to appoint Representatives. On the 15th May Sir N. R. O'Connor addressed a note to the Minister of Foreign Affairs taking act on behalf of His Majesty's Government of the declaration given by the Porte in their note of the day before. The Grand Vizier further promised to have the *status quo* at once restored in the neighbourhood of Rafah by withdrawing the Turkish detachment to the east of the demolished pillars, and having the latter replaced. A few days later the Captain of His Majesty's ship "Diana" reported that the Turkish troops had evacuated Taba on the 13th May, and on the 19th it was reported from Rafah that the Ottoman detachment had withdrawn to the east of the boundary, and that the pillars were being replaced.

(2) [Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice.]

Ibrahim Fathi Pasha and Captain R. R. Owen, the Delegates appointed by the Khedive, met the Turkish Staff Officers, Muzafer Bey and Fehmi Bey at Akaba early in June, and found them professedly ready to come to a prompt and reasonable settlement of the boundary. On getting to work, however, Captain Owen found that the pretensions of the Turkish did not at all tally with their previous professions. They claimed that by the expression used in the Porte's note of the 14th May to denote the point of departure on the Gulf of Akaba, viz., "a point at least 3 miles from Akaba," was meant a point 3 miles, not from Akaba Fort, but from "the position of Akaba," which, they argued, extended up to Mofrah. In fact, they claimed a point some 8 miles from Akaba Fort. The Egyptian Delegates contended that the point on the Gulf should be Marashash, which was $3\frac{3}{4}$ miles measured along the contour of the coast from Akaba Fort, and they offered to cede a portion of Nagb-al-Akaba, provided Mofrah remained to Egypt.

The Grand Vizier found himself unable, especially in the absence of accurate, detailed maps, to give categorical instructions, which might perhaps be construed as exceeding the terms of the Iradé communicated to His Majesty's Government in the Porte's note of the 14th May. His Highness had given the Sultan to understand on that date that the whole difficulty was disposed of, and he was very reluctant to approach His Majesty for fresh Iradés to settle the various questions at issue between the Commissioners. He was consequently obliged to content himself with sending general instructions, in the hope that the Delegates on the spot might be able to settle the minor details and thus narrow the area of points in dispute, should reference to Constantinople become inevitable. The Turkish Staff Officers, however, accused the Egyptian Delegates of seeking a strategic frontier; revived tentatively the old claims up to Suez; and finally maintained that the line should pass west of Mugdaba, situated some 20 miles west of the Marashash-Rafeh straight line. It was found impossible to arrive at any settlement, and the Egyptian Commissioners pushed on an independent survey of the border zone through territory claimed by the Turks. The latter promptly sent a small native post to occupy Kossaima, lying some 14 kilom. west of the straight line, and claimed by both sides. The Porte hesitated about giving definite orders for the evacuation of the place, declaring that its ownership must first be decided.

The Commission reached Rafeh on the 28th June, and ten days were occupied in preparing the maps. Sir N. R. O'Connor suggested that the Mixed Commission should discuss matters in a friendly spirit and endeavour to dispose of details, and that, if a reference to Constantinople was unavoidable, Captain Owen should collect and transmit written evidence as to the Egyptian claims to Kossaima and other places such as Ain Gedeirat, &c., at the same time exchanging identic maps with the Turks, who should also be invited to report fully to the Porte. On the 18th and 19th July two long but fruitless discussions took place at Rafeh with the Turkish Delegates, who, although the Porte's note of the 14th May expressly mentioned Jevad Pasha's telegram of the 8th April, 1892, as the basis of the *status quo* which the delimitation was to maintain, contended that what was meant was the *status quo* of the 14th May; and by way of reconciling the dual basis of the *status quo* and an approximately straight line from Rafeh to the head of the Gulf of Akaba, they proposed a boundary from Rafeh to the west of Mugdaba, and thence running at a distance varying from some 5 to 15 miles from the straight line to a point on the Gulf of Akaba to the west of Marashash, thus including on the Turkish side Kossaima, Ain Kadis, Ain Gedeirat, Mayein, Koubilla, and Mofrak, all of which were on the Egyptian side of the line proposed as frontier by Captain Owen. The latter, however, offered to give up a portion of Nagb-al-Akaba, so as to give breathing room to the Fort of Akaba, although it was to the west of the Rafeh-Marashash line. It was evident that the differences of the Commissioners were not susceptible of adjustment on the spot, and Reports with maps were accordingly forwarded to Constantinople to be dealt with between the Embassy and the Porte. The Turkish Reports and maps reached the Porte towards the end of August, and the Grand Vizier immediately instructed the Under-Secretary at

the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, assisted by the legal advisers of the Porte and a Staff Officer, to examine into the whole question on the basis of the *status quo* of April 1892 and to report to him. Mr. Fitzmaurice attended the meetings of this Committee to explain the Egyptian view of the case. He explained to the Committee that the claims of the Turkish Commissioners were incompatible with the accepted basis of an approximately straight line, and that, if they were persisted in, Egypt would be obliged, in compensation, to claim territory to the east of the Rafeh-Marashash line, including portions of Wadi Araba immediately behind Akaba; whereas, if a settlement on give-and-take lines were agreed to, Egypt would waive her claims to this territory and give Turkey part of Nagb-al-Akaba, thus leaving her breathing space around Akaba Fort, a conception which would have very considerable value for Turkey, should she contemplate running a branch of the Hedjaz Railway down on to Akaba and having a port there. The upshot of these deliberations was a Report to the Grand Vizier generally favourable to the Egyptian claims. His Highness laid the matter before the Council of Ministers, where he had much difficulty with some of his colleagues; but it was intimated to the Porte that it was futile seeking a solution other than the boundary proposed by the Egyptian Delegates, and that making difficulties at the eleventh hour was courting serious complications. Finally, a favourable Report was sent up to the Sultan, recommending a settlement on the following lines:—

1. Marashash to be the terminal point on the Gulf of Akaba.
2. Mofrak to be left to Egypt, the portion of Nagb-al-Akaba, strategically necessary to Akaba, remaining on the Turkish side.
3. Mugdaba, Kossaima, Ain Kadis, Ain Gedeirat, and Mayein to be left to Egypt, but Turkish soldiers and gendarmes to have the right like the local tribesmen to procure water from the springs, thus remaining on the west of the line.
4. Subject to the foregoing stipulations, the line of demarcation proposed by the Egyptian Delegates should "be applied to the ground."

Two of the Ministers refused to sign this Report, but the Sultan—who, owing to the precarious state of his health and on general grounds, was unwilling to see the question enter on an acute phase again—issued his *Irade* sanctioning the recommendations of his Ministers. The contents of the *Irade* were telegraphed to the Ottoman Delegates, and Sir N. R. O'Connor telegraphed a translation to the Acting Agent at Cairo on the 12th September. There was some further difficulty between the Commissioners, owing to the Turkish Delegates taking advantage of the fact that the Egyptian Commissioners were not so quickly acquainted with the *Irade* as they themselves. They induced Captain Owen to consent to the neutralization of Mofrak and to make concessions in Wadi Mayein. These concessions were subsequently abandoned by the Turkish Commissioners, and after some correspondence between Cairo and Constantinople as to the wording of the clause, giving Turkish soldiers and gendarmes the right to procure water from the springs left on the west of the boundary, His Majesty's Acting Agent at Cairo was able to announce in his telegram of the 2nd October that the maps and the Agreement on the basis of the Sultan's *Irade* had been signed and exchanged between the Ottoman and Egyptian Commissioners.

The net result of this settlement is that the Sultan has been compelled officially to admit that the term "Sinai Peninsula," the administration of which has been confided to the Khedive in virtue of Jevad Pasha's telegram of the 8th April, 1892, comprises the triangle of territory situated between the line from Rafeh to Suez (i.e., the frontier of the Vilayet or Province of Egypt proper), and the line following the pilgrim road from Suez via Nekl to Akaba, forming the northern boundary of the Peninsula of Sinai, technically so called. The Turkish contention had been that the administration of the Peninsula had been confided to the Khedive in connection with the protection of the Suez-Akaba pilgrim route, and that, when Akaba had been retroceded to Turkey in 1892, the western shore of the Gulf of Akaba as far as Ras

Mohamed, had similarly reverted to direct Ottoman jurisdiction, leaving only the western half of the Sinai Peninsula under Egyptian administration. The occupation of Taba was a daring though veiled attempt of the Sultan to give practical effect to this theory; but in face of the resolute attitude of His Majesty's Government, the attempt was abandoned, and the Sultan's Government fell back with a certain show of logic on the claim that the Sinai Peninsula did not comprise, geographically or otherwise, the territory situated north of the Suez-Akaba road and south-east of the Rafeh-Suez boundary of Egypt proper, territory which most English and foreign maps marked as Turkish. The Sultan's Iradés of the 14th May and the 11th September, 1906, are the formal confirmation of the interpretation given to Jevad Pasha's telegram by Lord Cromer, and published in the "Egyptian Gazette" of the 13th April, 1892.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE PROGRESS OF THE MACEDONIAN REFORMS,
1907-1908.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The Parliamentary Papers, *A. & P.* (1907), C, (*Cd.* 3454), and (*Cd.* 3455), pp. 27-502, give a fairly full account of financial, judicial and gendarmerie reforms for 1907 up to May 1907, as do *A. & P.* (1908), CXXV, (*Cd.* 3958), and (*Cd.* 4076), pp. 587-596, and pp. 607-890, for the rest of the year. Colonel Bonham's Report on the Gendarmerie and the Report of the British Member of the Financial Commission for the year are in *A. & P.* (1908), CXXV, (*Cd.* 4076), pp. 818-9, p. 836 *sqq.* They cover the ground adequately till December. In that month negotiations entered on a decisive stage, *v. infra*, pp. 219-221. From this point they are treated in (*Cd.* 3958).]

RELATIONS OF THE GREAT POWERS, 1907.

[*ED. NOTE.*—It will be noted that the close of the year shows the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador as still reluctant to sign the collective note to the Porte requesting judicial reform.]

No. 152.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 371/375.

(No. 3.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 9, 1907.

I told the Austrian Ambassador to-day that the reports from Macedonia had been very unsatisfactory, and I was sure it would be necessary to do something to improve matters this year.

I understood that the view of the Austrian Government had been that the question of the Customs Duties must be settled before further progress could be made.

The Ambassador said this had been their views, when funds were available there would be more prospect of success in the reforms. He asked how the matter now stood.

I said I was waiting for a report on the question of what had been done in connection with the Customs Houses. I should not feel at liberty to make any new conditions, but I must be quite sure that the conditions already stipulated for in concert with the Powers were being carried out. I said we would give our strong support to any effective proposals for reforms. We thought the concert of the Powers must be preserved, and this could best be done by working through the Financial Commission, which included all the Powers.

The Ambassador said he understood this was my view. And I explained how discouraging it was to see the powers of the Financial Commission minimised, as they had been by the vote in connection with the Agricultural Bank, in which the Austrian Representative had voted against the right of the Commission. I also dwelt upon the way in which the Gendarmerie were discouraged. I said it was necessary to be very firm in connection with these two institutions, so as to make them more effective.

The Austrian Ambassador said that, after the Three per Cents. were settled, he hoped more might be done.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/375.

(No. 17.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 9, 1907.

I spoke to Count Benckendorff to-day on the subject of Macedonia, and asked him to tell M. Isvolsky that the matter was causing us great anxiety.

We were most anxious to support effective proposals for reform which would preserve the concert of the Powers. I thought this could best be done by extending the powers of the Financial Commission, and I am sorry to observe that quite lately, in the matter of the funds which ought to be used by the Agricultural Bank for the benefit of the Vilayets, the Russian and Austrian Representatives had voted against the powers of the Financial Commission. It might not be a large matter in itself, but it tended to restrict rather than to enlarge the powers of the Commission, and it must have had a discouraging effect. I heard that the Turkish Government had been putting every kind of obstruction in the way of the Gendarmerie, who were also disheartened and discouraged.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 154.

Sir C. Greene to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/316.

(No. 3.) Confidential.

Sir,

Bucharest, D. January 9, 1907.

R. January 14, 1907.

At the monthly reception of the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 2nd instant, I asked His Excellency if he could tell me how his campaign against the Patriarch was getting on at Constantinople, and whether he had any hope of being successful in his efforts on behalf of the Koutzo-Vlaks.

General Lahovary said that the news which had reached him was reassuring. The Grand Vizier had been working hard, and some of the Ambassadors had been supporting him, so that it looked at last as if the Patriarch would be obliged to yield, and give effect to the concessions accorded to the Roumanians of Macedonia by the Imperial Iradé. Moreover the Greek Government had quite recently given assurances to the Porte that they would prevent the formation of bands upon Greek territory, and, this being so, the Roumanian Government would be ready to take note of these assurances and make overtures to Greece for the resumption of Diplomatic relations as soon as the pending representations to the Patriarch had been crowned with success. When that result had been attained the activity of the bands would *ipso facto* cease, and there would be no further reason to anticipate any persecution of the Koutzo-Vlaks.

Altogether, the General was nothing if not optimistic.

Speaking of the recent Italian and Austro-Hungarian declarations as to a future common policy in the Balkans, General Lahovary said that he welcomed the agreement respecting Albania, as the creation of an independent State there would facilitate the accomplishment of his own scheme for the eventual incorporation of the Koutzo-Vlak populations in the new Principality. He had reason, His Excellency said, to believe that the Koutzo-Vlaks would be welcomed by the Albanians, while the latter would no doubt be able to agree among themselves as to the selection of one of their own Chiefs to govern the State, on the lines, say, of Montenegro, or else they might invite a Prince from abroad, as had been done in other places. As regarded the extension of the Italo-Austrian principle of autonomy on the basis of nationality to Macedonia, it was more difficult to say whether such an idea could ever be realised.

Personally, he believed that Macedonia was bound sooner or later to fall to Bulgaria, and that any scheme of autonomy on the basis of nationality could only be effected by the intervention of the Powers in some such way as the intervention in Crete had taken place, but the problem was one of immense difficulty.

Replying to an inquiry of mine as to the recent visit of the Prince of Bulgaria, General Lahovary said that, in suddenly and unexpectedly dropping down upon Bucharest "like a bolt from the blue," the Prince had tried to play Roumania a *mauvais tour*, inasmuch as His Royal Highness knew that his arrival here would be likely to be misinterpreted at Constantinople, and so to interfere with the efforts which were being made there by the Roumanian Government to enlist the assistance of the Porte in the conflict with the Patriarch. The General added that King Charles had been very guarded in his language to the Prince and had not committed himself in any way.

With reference to the above remarks of the Minister, I learn from two of my colleagues that the General stated to them that the Prince of Bulgaria had some time back represented to the Porte that an *entente* was actually on foot between Bulgaria and Roumania at the inspiration of the latter, in order (as General Lahovary declared) to bring influence to bear upon the Turkish Gov[ernment]t in furtherance of his own ends; and that it was only after an official denial had been given at Constantinople by Roumania, and similar assurances had been offered to Munir Pasha here, that the report has been discredited. The Prince, General Lahovary said, would like Roumania to pull the chestnuts out of the fire, but she had no intention of doing so.

General Lahovary did not make any mention of the above in speaking to me, but merely appeared to be aggrieved because he thought that the success of his own efforts at Constantinople against the Patriarch was likely to be compromised by the visit of the Prince to Bucharest.

M. Také Jonesco, whom I saw for a moment as he was starting for Berlin to spend the Christmas holidays, gave me to understand that King Charles had received the Prince very graciously and had had an hour and a half's friendly conversation with him after dinner. Indeed, M. Jonesco said, there was even a question of inviting the Prince to attend the Roumanian Military Manœuvres, which are to take place this year—significantly enough—in the Dobrudja.

I have, &c.

CONYNNGHAM GREENE.

No. 155.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/376.

(No. 248.)

Sir,

Constantinople, D. April 25, 1907.

R. May 1, 1907.

In continuation of my despatch No. 242 of the 22nd instant reporting that I had been obliged to withhold my signature from the Protocol respecting the increase of the Customs duties, owing to my having received information that the new regulations were not being properly enforced, I have the honour to state that I have been able to satisfy myself that those regulations are now being put into execution.

In accordance with the arrangement of which I had the honour to inform you, Mr. Weakley with the dragomans of the German and Russian Embassies visited the Custom House on the 23rd instant and were assured by Hassan Fehmi Pasha that the difficulty in regard to Article I of the Regulations was a purely personal one and had been removed, and that the interference of the police with the customs formalities, of which complaint was also made, had been stopped by him during the previous week as soon as he had heard of it.

The dragomans therefore drew up a report to the effect that there was no cause of complaint and that they were satisfied with the explanation of Hassan Fehmi Pasha.

Mr. Weakley however was obliged to make a separate report pointing out that His Excellency had not denied that the regulations regarding attendance of officials had been broken, and stating that his information as to outside interference in respect to this point had been positive. Orders had now been given from high quarters that this abuse should cease once and for all, and Mr. Weakley was therefore able to express himself satisfied.

The orders referred to had been sent by the Sultan in consequence of strong representations which I made at the Palace on learning of the interference which had taken place.

Having received Mr. Weakley's report I informed Baron von Marschall that I was prepared to sign the Protocol, and I and the rest of my colleagues accordingly did so this morning and it was presented to Tewfik Pasha and signed by His Excellency during the afternoon.

In the course of this afternoon Mr. Lamb under my instructions, also presented to the Minister for Foreign Affairs the Note of which a copy is inclosed, setting forth the special reservations made by His Majesty's Government as laid down in your telegram No. 17 of the 25th February.

A copy of this note was at the same time communicated to my colleagues.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

Enclosure in No. 155.

Sir N. O'Conor to Tewfik Pasha.

(No. 27.)

British Embassy,

Monsieur le Ministre,

Constantinople, April 25, 1907.

I have this day signed the protocol by which in common with the Governments of Austro-Hungary, France, Germany, Italy and Russia, His Majesty's Government gives its consent on certain conditions to which the Sublime Porte have agreed, to the increase of the Turkish Customs duties from 8 % to 11 % for a period of seven years.

I am instructed by His Majesty's Government to take the opportunity of the signature of this protocol to make the following communication to the Sublime Porte :

The continued levy of the surcharge of 3 % during the seven years must be dependent upon the continuance of the Sublime Porte to fulfil the engagements which they have undertaken to perform, during the time for which it is conceded. Should the signing of the contracts or the execution of the proposed works for the amelioration of the Custom-house accommodation be unreasonably delayed, or should the Sublime Porte fail to carry out and maintain the improvements stipulated for in the Customs Administration and the conditions laid down in regard to the Civil Budget of the three Vilayets, the Macedonian Gendarmerie and the other kindred subjects in Macedonia, His Majesty's Government would regard itself as free to reconsider its consent to the three per cent. increase or to concert with the other Powers as to what measures of control of the Custom House would become necessary to secure that the additional Customs revenue is effectually devoted to the objects for which it is intended.

In making this communication to the Sublime Porte I avail myself of the opportunity to renew to you, Monsieur le Ministre, the assurance of my high consideration.

N. R. O'CONOR.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/350.

(No. 280.) Confidential.

Constantinople, D. May 13, 1907.

Sir,

R. May 21, 1907.

I have the honour to report that I called on the Grand Vizier alone this afternoon and had a long and interesting conversation with His Highness.

The purport of what the Grand Vizier said was this:—The Sultan, partly owing to His Highness' words, partly to His Majesty's personal observations of the political position achieved by Great Britain among the European Powers is uneasy at the relations existing between her and Turkey, and has been advised by His Highness to do something to show his good-will to us and his desire for British support. I replied that His Majesty's Government do not seek concessions like other Powers for the reason that British Capitalists are mistrustful of Turkish proceedings and uneasy as to the stability of affairs; but they urge Turkey to enter upon the path of progress, to reform her administration, to protect life and property and to give the inhabitants such security as will enable them to attend to their own affairs and to engage in the various enterprises and industries open to them without fear of oppression or suspicion.

I related to His Highness a conversation which I had lately had with Ghalib Pasha who was sent to me by His Majesty to inquire what I thought of the situation. I had said that I was full of anxiety as to the future. I saw an empty Treasury and annual deficit of between 4,000,000 and 5,000,000 pounds, the powers of borrowing on State securities exhausted and a floating debt of an incalculable amount. At the same time I noticed a complete administrative disorganization. I saw no one with the power to put matters right but the Sultan, who did not and could not with the burden of State on his shoulders, know the exact condition of things.

Ghalib Pasha had asked me whether therefore he was to tell the Sultan that I considered the situation as irremediably hopeless, and what advice I gave His Majesty.

I replied that the natural riches and resources of the country were so great and so numerous that I had not the least doubt that some years of a careful financial and economic régime would soon restore order in all departments. The first and most essential point however was that His Majesty should acquaint himself with the exact financial situation of the country and know how he stood in this respect. After this it would be easy to devise how on the one hand to limit expenditure within reasonable bounds and on the other to find new sources of revenue and new outlets for the commercial and industrial development of the Empire. Until His Majesty thoroughly acquainted himself with his real position it was impossible to hope for beneficial results. An inquiry such as I suggested should be conducted by a few honest and capable officials, foreigners perhaps among them, who would dare to speak the truth, which none of his present advisers would do.

I had given as an instance a report sent in a few years ago by the Minister of Finance, showing that the annual deficit was close on £5,000,000. His Majesty was displeased, and ordered his Secretary, Izzet Pasha, to prepare another report which was done with the result that the deficit was reduced to a million and a half and the Sultan relieved from anxiety. There were at that time some revenues to be converted. There were none remaining to-day and I believed that bankruptcy was in sight if the present disorder was allowed to continue.

The Grand Vizier said that he knew the substance of my remarks to Ghalib Pasha, that they had greatly disturbed His Majesty and that they had assisted him materially in his difficulties with the Palace. His Highness begged me to continue my representations on the same lines. The Sultan His Highness went on to say, was impressed by the number and strength of the Powers who, as friends or allies, had entered England's orbit, and equally so by the isolation of Germany and he

ventured to think we should take advantage of this. The Sultan would send to consult me again and if I continued to impress His Majesty with the conviction that I had no ulterior object in making such observations, he believed His Majesty would be frightened and something might come of it.

I said I was willing to assist His Highness in any way in my power, but that I had little hope of persuading the Sultan to set aside the counsels of his evil advisers, such as Izzet Pasha and others, and allow His Highness a free hand in administrative and financial matters.

His Highness observed that this would have been true some years ago, but that His Majesty was now in weak health when any sustained mental effort was painful, and he noticed a disposition to discharge upon him a greater share of both power and responsibility. He counted upon my assistance, for he knew that I had the Sultan's confidence, as far as it was possible for any one to have it who was honest in his motives and refused to pander to His Majesty's idiosyncrasies.

The friendly language of the Grand Vizier towards His Majesty's Government must be interpreted as a symptom of the Sultan's present frame of mind, which, though of a transitory character, may yet last long enough to enable us to gain some profit from it. His Highness is a capable administrator and possessed of considerable courage, but wanting in the higher qualities of statesmanship. He is eminently an opportunist, who has since his appointment materially assisted the ambitions and demands of the German Embassy. If he now turns towards us I have little doubt that he does so because he detects a reaction in our favour at Yildiz and thinks it prudent to run with the current. He is anxious to remain in power in expectation of what may occur and in the hope that a political crisis may enable him to play a big part in his country's history.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 157.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 371/377.

(No. 43.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 29, 1907.

Count Mensdorff came to see me to-day, and told me he had nothing of importance from Vienna, which was perhaps a satisfactory sign.

I said I was disappointed at hearing nothing from Vienna. The Austrian Government had pressed us to agree to the 3 % increase, and now that had been concluded I expected to hear something about judicial reforms.

But besides that I was much surprised at learning, through inquiries made of me, that the Austrian Government had approached other Powers with the object of asking them to join in communications respecting the repression of bands and prison reforms in Macedonia: about which we had heard nothing directly.

It was natural that Austria and Russia, who were the authors of the Murzteg [*sic*] programme, should communicate with each other in order to come to an agreement as to proposals that were to be put before the other Powers. But in this instance the action of Austria had gone beyond this. My information was that Baron d'Aehrenthal had approached the French Government: this I learnt from the fact that they had enquired whether we had received a similar proposal.

It appeared to me, from this, that the judicial reforms were hanging fire, and that other proposals were going to take precedence of them, and would be put forward by another group of Powers not including ourselves.

It would have been natural for me to begin asking the other Powers, the Italian Government for instance, whether they had received any such proposals. But before doing this I had desired to speak to Count Mensdorff.

We had so far co-operated with Austria, and made some sacrifice in order to do so. The 3 % increase of Customs was not popular in this Country, and I had taken the risk of incurring a good deal of criticism in order to preserve the concert of the Powers. If I were now obliged to say in Parliament that we had found difficulty in co-operating with Austria, it would certainly have a very unfavourable effect. There were, of course, some currents and cross-currents in European politics generally. But to introduce these into the Balkan question would create very undesirable complications and confusion. We had hitherto studiously avoided making any mischief, though that had not been recognised in all sections of the European Press. But if we were driven to taking an independent line in Macedonian affairs, it would no doubt add considerably to the unrest in the Balkans and the surrounding region.

Count Mensdorff said that there must be some mistake. He would certainly have heard from Baron d'Aehrenthal if anything of the kind had been set on foot. He had heard nothing, and would lose no time in making enquiries. He observed that it was quite true the British Government had never made any mischief in these matters, but that some of our Committees and independent private people, who are very active, had tended to create friction.

I said it would, in any case, add considerably to this tendency if language had to be used on behalf of the British Government to the effect that they found difficulty in co-operating with other Powers. There was a section of opinion in this Country which, sometimes with regard to Russia, but more generally with regard to Austria, expressed the view that the policy of the Governments of those Countries was an obstacle to reforms in Macedonia. I desired to maintain the policy of co-operation.

I had nothing to say against the merits of proposals to deal with prison reforms and to deal more effectively with the bands. Indeed the latter object, if it could be secured, would for the moment, perhaps, be worth more than anything else. But it was very desirable that further reforms should be put forward in such a way as not to lead to any new grouping of the Powers.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 158.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/323.

Tel. (No. 67.)

Foreign Office, May 31, 1907.

D. 4.40 P.M.

Following received from H[is] M[ajesty's] Amb[assado]r at Vienna tel[egram]
No. 4:—

"I learn that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs has directed Russian Ambassador here to inform Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t are unable to entertain Austrian proposals for separate action of 4 Powers in the Near East. These proposals must be those to which I alluded in the last paragraph of my despatch No. 60 of the 17th instant, with the addition of proposal that Russia should endeavour to bring France into the combination."

This refers to information which has reached H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] that the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t have been endeavouring to promote separate action by France, Germany, Austria and Russia in Macedonia to the exclusion of Great Britain and Italy.

See also last paragraph of Sir E. Goschen's desp[atch] No. 60 which you will receive in print by bag on June 15.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [F.O. 371/272. Sir E. Goschen to Sir E. Grey, No. 60 of May 17, 1907. The last paragraph is as follows :—

" I have ventured to call your attention to this unmistakable hint with regard to the revival of the 'Imperial Dreibund' as I have heard on authority which I cannot disregard that Austria-Hungary and Germany have been and are doing all in their power, by means of promises of future support, especially in the Balkans, to draw Russia aside from the understanding with Great Britain which is now in the course of being negotiated."]

No. 159.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/377.

(No. 67.) Most Confidential.

Vienna, D. May 31, 1907.

Sir,

R. June 3, 1907.

At the last official reception held by Baron d'Aehrenthal, which was on the 22nd instant, I told His Excellency that I had received a despatch from you in which you had expressed the hope that progress might now be made with the Judicial Reforms in Macedonia. His Excellency replied that owing to many unforeseen difficulties the project for these Reforms, which was being drawn up by the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Ambassadors at Constantinople was not in an advanced state of preparation, but that as soon as it was complete he would consult with M. Isvolsky as to the form and manner in which it should be communicated to the other Powers interested. His Excellency held out no hopes that this would take place in the near future, stating that, as the time both of the Civil Agents and the Gendarmerie Officers was up in November, and that fresh arrangements with regard to them might have to be made, it was not likely that any definite progress as to Judicial Reforms could be made before the above date.

His Excellency also said that he now took a very gloomy view of Macedonian affairs, and that he had been quite startled by the news which had reached him of the increase in both the numbers and in the activity of the marauding bands. The fact that Turkish bands were now also in the field had made the worst impression on him. He had recently twice called the attention of the Ottoman Government to this circumstance, and had strongly urged it to take stronger measures not only to keep its own countrymen in order but to repress the other Bands. His representations, however, seemed to have had no effect. His Excellency added that, curiously enough, the recrudescence in the activity of the Bands coincided with the date of the visit of the King of Italy to Athens. I said that I could not quite follow the sequence of ideas which led to the assumption that the two events had any connection with each other. His Excellency replied that he himself was far from assuming that such was the case; he had only mentioned the coincidence because nearly all the reports he had recently received from the Near East had called his attention to it.

I have felt it my duty to report the foregoing conversation at some length because it is the first time that I have heard Baron d'Aehrenthal express any misgivings as to the progress of affairs in Macedonia or throw out any doubts as to the efficacy of the Mürszteg Agreement. His Excellency has hitherto been careful, like his predecessor, Count Goluchowski, to express optimistic views on these subjects, and has always shown himself to be somewhat sensitive to any criticism with regard to the progress of the Reforms.

In view of this change of tone, it is permissible to consider whether the extent of Baron d'Aehrenthal's sudden pessimism is entirely due to the increased activity of the Macedonian Bands, or whether perhaps he is emphasizing his anxiety with a view

to prepare the way for a demand for the assistance of certain Powers in the settlement of the Macedonian Question.

I mention this because, in the first place, His Excellency recently hinted to one of my colleagues that it was a pity that Germany, with her great influence at Constantinople, was not one of the mandatory Powers, and secondly, because it has come to my knowledge from two separate sources that His Excellency has been making proposals to the Russian Government, which, if accepted and carried out successfully, would entail separate action in the Near East on the part of Austria-Hungary and Germany, Russia, and France. I have been unable to ascertain the extent of these proposals or the nature of the offers which are said to have accompanied them, but, in view of the sources of my information, I have little doubt that such proposals and such offers have been made.

In any case I have thought it my duty to lay my information before you. Should it be correct there is good ground, in view of Germany's present position in Europe, for the surmise that the plan was made in Berlin and that its ultimate object is the formation of a Quadruple Alliance which, beginning in a small way in the Near East, might eventually lead to a rearrangement of European Alliances.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 160.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/377.

(No. 68.) Secret.

Sir,

Vienna, D. May 31, 1907.

R. June 3, 1907.

With reference to my despatch marked "most confidential" No. 67 of to-day's date,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that I received confidential information yesterday to the effect that the Russian Ambassador at this Court had been desired by M. Isvolsky to let Baron d'Aehrenthal know that the Russian Government did not see its way to entertaining His Excellency's proposals for separate action on the part of the four Powers in the Near East.

From what I was told I gathered that M. Isvolsky begged at the same time that his decision might be conveyed to the German Government.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

(¹) [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

No. 161.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 371/377.

(No. 49.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, June 4, 1907.

Count Mensdorff came to-day to give me a reply from Baron d'Aehrenthal, which he did verbally to the following effect:—

It was inconceivable to Baron d'Aehrenthal how the rumour, mentioned to Count Mensdorff by the King,⁽¹⁾ Sir C. Hardinge, and myself, to the effect that he was attempting to bring about a fresh grouping of the Powers in regard to the Balkans, had arisen.

(¹) [*G.P.* XXII, p. 412.]

As he had already stated by telegram, this was quite inaccurate⁽²⁾ and he had no intention to substitute joint action by four Powers for the dual *entente* already existing with Russia, which gave such satisfactory results.

As Count Mensdorff was aware, he was in continual communication with the Russian Government on the subject of the application of the reforms.

At the present time this exchange of views concerned proposals for judicial reform and was based on conservative principles already known to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]. His Excellency had no intention to abandon this line of conduct.

In future, as in the past, he attached the highest importance to the support of the policy of Austria-Hungary and Russia at Constantinople by all the Powers, and he was confident that His Majesty's Government would continue their support.

The proposals which, in concert with Russia, he hoped to make at no distant date on the subject of judicial reforms, would satisfy H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] that their information was devoid of foundation and that his policy was in no sense altered.

C[oun]t Mensdorff was to give me categorical explanations in this sense, and at the same time to express Baron d'Aehrenthal's thanks for the frank manner in which the subject had been treated, thanks to which the incident could be closed without affecting the good and friendly relations between the two countries.

I asked him to thank Baron d'Aehrenthal for the communication, and to say that the tone of it and the manner in which my representations had been received were such as to encourage frank communication on our part.

Count Mensdorff said he was exceedingly glad that I had spoken to him at once, and hoped I would always communicate frankly when there was danger of misunderstanding.

I told him that the personal factor counted for something in such matters, and that I had felt it was easy to speak to him on matters of difficulty such as this.

I also told him how explicit our information had been, coming not from any French source, to the effect that Russia had declined a proposal for the grouping of four Powers, which would exclude England and Italy, and would entail a new plan with regard to Macedonia. And I said I had made no mention of this information to any other Power, because I desired not to make mischief. The French Government had made an enquiry of us first, as Count Mensdorff knew, but the subsequent information I had received had not been communicated by me to any other Power.

Count Mensdorff expressed his appreciation of this: otherwise further complications might have been caused.

I said I hoped we should now work together, so that there might be an improvement in Macedonia. There was real danger of an outbreak if the rival bands continued their proceedings; and I told Count Mensdorff of the specific information we had received from the Bulgarian Government, with its hint of trouble between Servia and Bulgaria, and of the action I had taken at Belgrade.

[I am, &c.]
E. GREY.]

(²) [But see Telegram from German Embassy in Vienna to Berlin of April 30, 1907, *G.P.* XXII, pp. 410-1, and Baron von Aehrenthal's explanation of June 3, pp. 411-2, *r.* also *ib.*, pp. 55-6.]

No. 162.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear O'Connor,

July 11, 1907.

I had to receive a deputation about Macedonia the other day. As the deputation was very influential and nothing had been said by the Government about Macedonia for a long time I felt their request for a statement was reasonable.

(¹) [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

What I said has given a great deal of dissatisfaction to the Balkan Committee, but as I continue to think it represented the facts of the case I shall be able to stand by it.

If, in the course of the next six months, the Turks could succeed in destroying the Greek and Servian bands and driving them out of the country, it appears to me that the list of outrages would be so tremendously reduced that I should be able to point to an improvement in the state of Macedonia which could not be gainsaid. If the Turks could put down the bands they would destroy the cause for agitation here or elsewhere. They would cease to be worried by the European Powers about Macedonia and they would get rid of the danger of being attacked by Bulgaria and of the political conflagration which would ensue by which they would be sure to lose.

If, on the other hand, the outrages by bands go on, the demands for European control will be greatly strengthened. We and the other Powers shall give the Turkish Government no peace and Bulgaria will not remain quiet indefinitely. If only the Sultan would see where his true interest lies and would really make his officials feel that he wishes the operations of the bands stopped and would encourage the use of the gendarmerie to help in doing this and would let them be organized for this purpose under the executive control of European officers, he might put an end to the Macedonian question.

I am much impressed by Harvey's last reports which emphasize the improvement of the Turkish administration *per se* and which yet make it clear that owing to the bands the insecurity of the country is worse than ever.

I know that you have already put the question to the Sultan in this light and I am only writing to make you feel how entirely I agree on this point and how important it seems to me.

I must leave it to you to do what you can to bring it home to the Turkish Government and to your colleagues.

If the outrages by the bands still continue, and, if nothing is done about judicial reforms, there will be great trouble next year.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 163.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/377.

(No. 499.) Confidential.

Sir,

Therapia, D. August 12, 1907.

R. August 19, 1907.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a Memorandum by Mr. Fitzmaurice, Acting First Dragoman of this Embassy, giving the substance of a report recently received at the Sublime Porte from Munir Pasha, Ottoman Ambassador at Paris, respecting the attitude of the various Powers towards Turkey in the matter of reforms in Macedonia.

Munir Pasha is a discreditable but wily official who works for the anti-English party at the Palace with a view to his own profit irrespective of other interests, but it would, I think, be well that Sir F. Bertie should be made aware of His Excellency's attitude in this question.

I have, &c.
N. R. O'CONOR.

Enclosure in No. 163.

Memorandum by Mr. Fitzmaurice.

(No. 148.)

The following is the substance of a report recently received from Munir Pasha, Ottoman Ambassador at Paris:—

Though *pourparlers* have been actively proceeding for some time concerning the drawing up of a project for establishing control of the judicial system in the "three provinces," no such project has as yet been laid before the French Government. Russia and Austria desire the maintenance of the *status quo* and the direct authority of His Majesty the Sultan in Macedonia contrary to the projects of Bulgarian origin which have the sympathy of England and the latter Power is aiming at the eventual appointment of an European and Christian Governor General of the provinces in question and the creation of more or less disguised autonomy. It would be well to remember that it was on British inspiration that the reforms assumed a European (*i.e.*, foreign) character while Great Britain again was the originator of the Gendarmerie proposals as also of the Financial reforms. It is Sir E. Grey who has stated that the situation in Macedonia is as bad as in the past and that it is consequently necessary to undertake the reform of the Judiciary.

The cabinets of St. Petersburg and Vienna are of opinion that giving satisfaction to Bulgarian aspirations under the pretext that the continuance of disorders and the exploits of the bands were due to the inadequacy of the reforms already introduced, would give rise to serious complications endangering the peace of Europe. They are consequently anxious at all costs to prevent the reopening of the Eastern Question for which they think the present moment is not propitious.

France is not taking an active part in these reforms but merely plays the rôle of spectator.

G. H. FITZMAURICE.

Therapia, August 9, 1907.

No. 164.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear O'Connor,

August 13, 1907.

I had for a moment a little hesitation as to whether it was safe to have given the Sultan the extract from my private letter, for fear he should use it as an argument against judicial or any other reforms, on the ground that strong action against the bands was all that was required.

But I see you used it to support your view that the Gendarmerie should be employed against the bands, and I am glad you made use of it for that purpose.

I want the Powers to make a real effort to stop the Greek bands, by frightening Greece and making it clear to the Greeks that they would lose and not gain by keeping up the bands.

That was why I thought of sending Graves to Castoria, in order that we might have an overwhelming case to put before the Powers.

I am convinced that if we could stop the Greek bands, the Bulgarian bands would cease, for Bulgaria would have no reason then for encouraging her bands, and every reason to discourage them in order to stand well with the Powers.

As to the Servian bands. The Powers and Bulgaria together could easily frighten Servia by letting her know that, if her bands did not cease, Servia would be left to the mercy of Bulgaria, who would make short work of her.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

Hardinge, who is to see d'Aehrenthal when he is with the King this week, will impress upon him the importance of this question, and find out what his disposition is, and till he returns I shall make no further plans about it. I have spoken to Benckendorff in the same sense about the bands.

I dare say you are right in postponing the visit of Graves to Castoria, and it may not be necessary after all.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 165.

Extract from Memorandum by Sir C. Hardinge, August 19, 1907.

Secret.
(13146*)

Visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl.⁽¹⁾

[*ED. NOTE.*—The first part of this report deals with the visit to the German Emperor at Cransberg and will be published in Volume VI.]

The King left for Ischl at 11.30 in the evening of the same day after a very cordial farewell from the Emperor, who accompanied His Majesty to the train.

On the following morning the Emperor of Austria, accompanied by two Aides-de-camp, met the King at Gmunden and travelled with His Majesty to Ischl. The King was very cordially received by the inhabitants of Ischl, the most striking fact being the complete absence of troops or of any military display.

Baron Aehrenthal, Minister for Foreign Affairs, had been summoned by the Emperor to Ischl, and, as he and I had been intimate friends at St. Petersburg for the last eight years, we spent most of the day together, and travelled over a wide field of subjects of discussion.

Before making any proposals to Baron Aehrenthal such as I had been instructed by Sir E. Grey to suggest, I wished to clear up the motives of his attitude towards England since his accession to office, which had on more than one occasion appeared to be of a somewhat unfriendly nature, and inconsistent with the traditional friendship which has hitherto existed between Great Britain and Austria. When he referred to the denial which he gave three months ago to the reports of a coalition of certain Powers for the settlement of Balkan questions without the co-operation of England and Italy, I taxed him with the unfriendly attitude assumed by him in his discussions with Sir E. Goschen on the Turkish 3 per cents., the Spanish notes, and the Sugar Convention. I told him that his remarks on these subjects had caused some surprise to Sir E. Grey, and more particularly on the occasion of the communication of the Spanish note, since it could not be said to concern Austria in any way, and was, moreover, in accordance with the Secret Agreement with Italy of 1887 to which Austria was a consenting party.

Baron Aehrenthal replied that the isolated action of Great Britain in withholding for several months her consent to the increase of the Turkish customs dues had jeopardised the concert of the Powers in Macedonia, and had had the appearance of a selfish policy dictated by the advantages to be obtained for British trade in the Near East. His objection to the Spanish note was not based on its contents, but on the inopportuneness of its signature, since it had seemed to be directed against Germany, Austria's ally, with a view to completing her isolation in Europe. The action of His Majesty's Government, prompted by Parliamentary reasons, in attempting to modify the Sugar Convention to their own advantage after having been chiefly instrumental in obtaining the adhesion of certain Powers to it, had created a feeling of unrest in the sugar industries of Europe, and had, so far as

(¹) [*cp.* Sir Sidney Lee : *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 549-50.]

Austria and Hungary were concerned, come at a very inconvenient moment when the "Ausgleich" was on the point of being settled, thereby raising a serious question which it would be difficult, and take some time, for him to explain to me. Moreover, he had received reports from his Agents abroad of endeavours made by His Majesty's Government to encourage Servia against Austria at a moment when Austro-Servian relations were strained, and also to incite Italy in her aspirations in Albania. The satisfactory interview which he had had with Signor Tittoni had removed any misunderstanding in this last respect, since the Italian Government had realized that Austria would not tolerate the conversion of the Adriatic into an Italian lake, and that they had appreciated the fact that the inhabitants of Albania are wild and savage tribes, who would be very difficult to conquer and govern and had best be left alone.

I told Baron Aehrenthal that the imputations made against the policy of His Majesty's Government in Servia and elsewhere were groundless, and that it was a pity that he had not, on receiving these reports, communicated their contents at once to Sir E. Goschen, in order to clear up the mystery, in the same manner as Sir E. Grey had acted towards Count Mensdorff on a recent occasion. As to the action of Great Britain in withholding her consent for a time to the increase of the Turkish customs duties, His Majesty's Government were able to point to the additional safeguards which they had succeeded in obtaining so as to prevent any evasion by the Turkish Government of their obligations towards the Powers, and to say that their policy had not been inspired by selfish motives, since whatever improvements in the Customs Administration had been secured by the representations of His Majesty's Government would be to the equal advantage of the trade of all countries. As regards his statement of the inopportuneness of the recent exchange of notes with Spain, I pointed out to Baron Aehrenthal that our negotiations were commenced two years ago, and had been inspired by the desire of the late Government to safeguard our position at Gibraltar. Between nations, as between individuals, advantage had to be taken of the psychological moment, and the inopportune moment for Germany had been England's opportunity, created by the King's visit to Carthage, for the conclusion of these long-pending negotiations. Whether Baron Aehrenthal's fears had been justified was still a matter of opinion. Turning to the question of the Sugar Convention, I remarked that his annoyance seemed to be chiefly inspired by internal reasons which neither he nor Count Mensdorff were able to explain, and which it would consequently have been difficult for His Majesty's Government to anticipate. The objections seemed, therefore, to be more of a private than of an international character.

Baron Aehrenthal then informed me that further objections had been raised by Germany and Holland to the signature of the Additional Article of the Sugar Convention, but that he had instructed the Austrian Ambassador in Berlin to urge the German Government to sign at once, leaving time for discussion before ratification. If the Powers, after signature, refused to ratify, the denunciation of the Convention might be considered to have taken place on the 1st September. I expressed my surprise at this development, which was new to me, and which he seemed unable to explain, and I told him that my conviction was that, in the event of the non-signature of the Additional Article, His Majesty's Government would denounce the Convention on the 1st September, with the condition that if, by a certain date (say, the 1st March), an Agreement should have been come to by the Powers, the denunciation would be considered to have not taken place.

During the course of the day I developed to Baron Aehrenthal the views of Sir E. Grey upon the actual situation in Macedonia, dwelling upon the improvement which has actually been made in the Turkish administration of the three provinces, but which has not achieved the restoration of order and tranquillity owing to the disastrous action of the bands of various nationalities, and more particularly of the Greek bands, who endeavoured to extend the area of settlement of their coreligionists in Macedonia by the expulsion and ruthless extermination of their

rivals. I pointed out to him the inability of the Turkish Government to deal successfully with the Greek bands so long as they were led by officers of the Greek army and were in possession of unlimited funds with which to purchase the neutrality or inaction of the Turkish forces, and, as an instance of the murderous proclivities of the Greek bands, I quoted the terrible occurrence reported recently by Mr. Harvey of a Greek band having fired upon and killed some Bulgarian peasant women who were returning from working in the fields in the neighbourhood of Castoria. I gave Baron Aehrenthal a Memorandum containing full details of this dastardly incident. I told him that, in order to meet this situation, Sir E. Grey had instructed me to propose to him, as had been already suggested to Count Benckendorff, that simultaneous representations of a very strong character should be made by the Powers at Sophia, Belgrade, and Athens against the formation and arming of the bands, which, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the Governments of the Balkan States were able to prevent, and that a hint should be given at Athens that, unless the operations of the Greek bands immediately ceased, the Powers would take forcible steps to put an end to the intolerable situation created by the defiance of their efforts to improve the local condition of the inhabitants of Macedonia.

Baron Aehrenthal informed me that the information in the possession of His Majesty's Government coincided entirely with that which he had received from the Austrian Agents in Macedonia, and that in view of the undoubted improvement in the Turkish administration in the three provinces, he entirely concurred with His Majesty's Government in the imperative necessity of at once putting an end to the activity of the bands. He had already been considering the best means to this end, and, in view of the terms of article 3 of the Münzsteg programme, which, by its unfortunate wording, had encouraged the rival nationalities in Macedonia to believe that they could extend the scope of their national aspirations by the destruction of their rivals, he had decided to propose to the Russian Government that the two Governments should publicly announce their interpretation of this article as implying the maintenance of the *status quo* at the date of the Agreement, and as ignoring all changes introduced since that date through the activity of the various bands. He wished to persevere in the course which he had proposed, but if, as was probable, it appeared after a short time that this announcement had failed to secure the desired result and to mitigate the activity of the bands, he would gladly accept Sir E. Grey's suggestion to make a determined and combined effort by joint and simultaneous representations at Sophia, Belgrade, and Athens. He welcomed his proposal as further evidence of the identity of the views of the British and Austrian Governments as to the pacification of Macedonia and the measures to be taken for the amelioration of the native populations. I mentioned to Baron Aehrenthal that the Duke of Sparta had recently told Lord Knollys that it would be impossible for the Greek Government to punish the Greek officers who led the bands, as it would entail a revolution and possibly the overthrow of the Greek dynasty; and he replied that, in that case, the proposed action of the Powers would obviously tend to strengthen the hands of the King of Greece and to convince his subjects of the necessity of bowing to the will of the Powers.

Baron Aehrenthal further added that, in the event of war breaking out in the Balkan Peninsula between Turkey and the rival States, the Austrian Government would abstain from all interference and would endeavour to induce the other Powers to follow their example, and at the same time to notify to the combatants that whatever might be the result of the war the final settlement would have to be made with the intervention of the Powers. I told Baron Aehrenthal that, although such a contingency had not so far been seriously contemplated by His Majesty's Government, I had good reason to believe that such a programme would meet with Sir E. Grey's entire concurrence.

He further told me that the proposed scheme of judicial reforms would be immediately communicated to the Ambassadors at Constantinople, who would discuss

them and introduce such modifications as might seem necessary or advisable. I asked whether it was true that there had been a divergence of opinion between the Austrian and Russian Governments as to the appointment of Judicial Inspectors, and he replied that the proposals of both Governments would be submitted to the Ambassadors, who would adopt that which they might consider the best and most suitable to local conditions, but that he, for his part, did not consider the acceptance of his proposal as in any way essential. The important point, in his opinion, was to obtain the unanimous assent of the Powers to any definite scheme of judicial reforms suitable to the requirements of the country, and, as soon as this was attained, to make the Turkish Government understand that they would have to accept the scheme and to carry out their obligations to the Powers.

He mentioned to me that he had been informed by Count Mensdorff of the reported intention of Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria to proclaim his independence at the Tirnovo fêtes, and he had seized the opportunity of a recent visit of the Prince to Vienna to obtain a definite assurance from His Royal Highness that he would do nothing of the kind. The Prince had disclaimed any such intention, but Baron Aehrenthal said that he knew that M. Stancioff, in his utterances at Sophia, had not been as explicit as the Prince and had given rise to doubts. He explained this by M. Stancioff being essentially an opportunist.⁽²⁾

Turning to the general international situation in Europe, Baron Aehrenthal remarked that the balance of power was now more evenly poised than had ever been the case heretofore. He rejoiced in the improvement in the relations between England and Germany, which could only be to the interest of all, while the conclusion of an Agreement between England and Russia would, by the elimination of all motives for conflict in Asia, remove one more obstacle to the peace of the world. The *détente* between France and Germany in Morocco was a fact of great importance, and his only fear in this direction was the possibility of the revival of the influence of Baron Holstein, who had been responsible for the appearance of the Emperor at Tangier and for the disastrous policy of Germany in Morocco, and whom he knew to have the "petite entrée" of Prince Bülow's house in Berlin.

As regards the relations between Great Britain and Austria, he said that he was very pleased to have had the opportunity of thoroughly discussing them with me and of clearing up all misapprehensions, and he expressed himself as more than ever convinced of the community of British and Austrian interests and of the necessity for carefully maintaining the traditional policy of friendship existing between the two countries.

During the course of the day I received a message that the Emperor wished to receive me in private audience, and His Majesty was pleased to confer with me for about half-an-hour in a very gracious and friendly manner. His Majesty showed the greatest interest in the politics of the Balkan States, with all the details of which he appeared to be thoroughly conversant. I spoke to the Emperor in much the same sense that I had spoken to Baron Aehrenthal on the necessity of restricting the activity of the bands, and His Majesty urged the closest co-operation between the two Governments in all matters affecting the politics of the Near East. I learnt later from the King that the Emperor had expressed himself as quite satisfied with the results of the audience.

I should add that the King had two long conversations with Baron Aehrenthal, and also discussed Anglo-Austrian relations with the Emperor. I understand from what His Majesty told me that they were quite satisfactory.

The King left Ischl on the morning of the 16th, the Emperor having accompanied His Majesty to the station, where the two Sovereigns took leave of each other.

C. H.

August 19, 1907.

(2) [cp. pp. 356-7, No. 261.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 371/380.

(No. 79.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 22, 1907.

The Austrian Chargé d'Affaires came to ask me to-day whether I was satisfied about Sir Charles Hardinge's interview at Ischl.

I told him that I had not yet seen Sir Charles Hardinge, but I had received an account of the interview and was favourably impressed by it. Everything seemed to have gone off very satisfactorily, and I was glad that Sir Charles Hardinge had had an opportunity of renewing his acquaintance with Baron d'Aehrenthal and discussing matters with him.

I spoke strongly about the need for doing something effective to stop the action of the bands. I said that Baron d'Aehrenthal's idea of correcting the erroneous impression given by Article 3⁽¹⁾ of the Münzsteg Programme was a very good one, and the sooner it was carried out the better; but I was afraid that, by itself, it would not be effective unless it was understood that it would be followed by further steps on the part of the Powers.

I said that our reports as to the condition of things in Macedonia got worse and worse. The Bulgarian bands had lost patience owing to the provocation of the Greek bands, and outrages were increasing.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 111, and *note*.]

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/378.

(No. 531.) Secret.

Sir,

Therapia, D. August 28, 1907.

R. September 2, 1907.

I have the honour to report that I have recently received information from a Confidential source as to the contents of a Despatch addressed to the Porte by Ahmed Tewfik Pasha, Ottoman Ambassador in Berlin, in reply to its instructions to endeavour to secure the support of the German Government in opposing the fresh proposals for Judicial Reform in Macedonia. His Excellency declared the views of the German Government to be that the Judicial Reforms were merely the outcome of the Münzsteg Programme which the Ottoman Government had already accepted in principle; that the good offices of the German Government would be unavailing in deflecting the Powers from their purpose; and that the schemes of reform were now too far advanced for them to recede, and that in any case the Ottoman Government was scarcely entitled to the good-will of Germany in view of the delays in settling the Konieh irrigation question and that of the prolongation of the Baghdad Railway, not to mention the fact that while Krupp's claims were still unpaid, the Ottoman Government was ordering a cruiser in Italy, torpedo-boats in France and war material in England.

The Ottoman Ambassador added that he understood that Monsieur Kiderlen Wächter had already spoken in the above sense to the Ottoman Minister for Foreign Affairs.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONNOR.

(¹) [*cp. G.P. XXII*, p. 415.]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/325.

(No. 133.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. October 4, 1907.

R. October 7, 1907.

On the eve of Monsieur Isvolsky's arrival in Vienna the Austrian press was replete with the most cordial expressions of welcome to His Excellency, and there was scarcely a journal that did not hail his arrival as the finishing touch to the good work carried out during the past summer by Sovereigns and statesmen in the cause of peace.

The semi-official organ "Fremdenblatt" devoted a long leading article in its issue of the 25th to Monsieur Isvolsky's merits as a statesman and diplomatist. It said that His Excellency's performances during the relatively short time during which he has conducted the Foreign Affairs of Russia ensured for him the recognition of all peace lovers in general and the sympathy of public opinion in Austria-Hungary in particular. Among the most noteworthy political performances of Monsieur Isvolsky were cited the understandings with Great Britain and Japan. These arrangements, it was stated, ensured to Russia the possibility of consolidating and utilising her possessions in Central and East Asia and allayed any fear which might have existed lest the two great rivals in the Far East should profit by her material weakness at sea and on land to pursue an aggressive policy against her in those regions. Great Britain and Japan have voluntarily renounced as regards Russia the position which their combined strength gave them, and that Monsieur Isvolsky should have attained this object in the relatively short period which had elapsed since the Treaty of Portsmouth was a striking proof of the brilliancy of his statesmanship.

In continuing this theme the Article stated that there could be no possible doubt but that King Edward's love of peace had rendered Monsieur Isvolsky's task easier in London and also in a greater degree in Tokio where the directors of Japanese Foreign Policy were quick to perceive the limits set by the humane and peaceful ideas of the British Monarch to the practical utility to them of the Alliance with Great Britain. That which also contributed to his double success was, besides the loyalty and straightforwardness of his character, the universal knowledge that he was a thoroughgoing and energetic opponent of Russian Chauvinism and the party of revenge.

The Article then dilated on the effect which Monsieur Isvolsky's policy in coming to agreements with Great Britain and Japan would have upon European politics. It was thought in many quarters that on assuming office he would endeavour to find a remedy for the past failure of Russian policy in a new grouping of the European Powers and in a policy of adventure. These ideas had however been completely discredited and events have proved that in every direction where he could make his influence felt, he had been unremitting in the cause of peace, not only for Russia but for the whole world. The arrangements with Japan, and more especially with Great Britain, having eliminated all fear of complications in the Far East, had enabled Russia to concentrate her thoughts not only on her internal necessities and rehabilitation, but had also placed her in a position to take her proper place in European politics and to pursue with fresh energy at the side of Austria-Hungary and the other Great Powers the work of reform in Macedonia. While the Balkan politics were once the source of friction and misunderstandings between the two neighbouring Monarchies these had now undertaken the mission of removing the dangers to the peace of Europe which even after the disappearance of all disputes between Vienna and St. Petersburg might still arise from the situation in the South East. Monsieur Isvolsky had justly pointed out lately that for years past the efforts of Russia and Austria-Hungary had averted any serious complications in the Balkans. Local conditions had become more

favourable, but as a sober observer he could not speak of any thorough improvement in them. When he had pointed out that the last point of the Mürzsteg Programme had not yet been realised he had been thinking of the resources to which application had not yet been made in order to finish the work. The adoption of the Judicial Reforms in the programme of the two Powers had already shown that the creators of the Mürzsteg agreements regarded the improvement of Macedonian judicial conditions as essential for the success of their work. The melancholy appearances which still existed did not shake one's belief in the plan of reform, but only show the necessity for carrying it out thoroughly. Monsieur Isvolsky had laid emphasis on this in many places and, in agreement with Baron d'Aehrenthal, had been at pains to convince the leading factors of Turkey that the unchangeable views of Vienna and St. Petersburg correspond with the interests of the Ottoman Empire and Ruler. Monsieur Isvolsky's visit to Vienna, the Article continued, would assist him in solving the question. "The clearing up of Russia's international relations must strengthen the sympathies with which those who are not directly concerned follow the Austro-Russian work of reform. The assurance of Russia's interests in distant zones makes it possible for her to bring all the might of her influence to bear on this work. Nowhere therefore more than in Austria will M. Isvolsky's success be warmly welcomed."

Since Monsieur Isvolsky has been here I have had but few opportunities of having any serious conversations with His Excellency, as we have both been much occupied, and he has never been more than two days in Vienna at a time. I called upon him to-day, however, and finding that he had a spare quarter of an hour, we had a short conversation. I told him that as there had been but few comments in the Vienna press on the subject of the agreements between our two countries, and that as the Emperor and Baron d'Aehrenthal had only spoken to me a few words on the subject expressive of their pleasure at the removal of causes of friction in so many parts of the world, I should be glad if he would give me his own impression of how the Agreements had been received in Austro-Hungarian political circles. His Excellency replied that actually his feeling was that, though there had been a remarkable reticence on the subject in the press, the Agreements had made a favourable impression on public opinion in Austria-Hungary. He had gathered this from his conversations with Baron d'Aehrenthal and other Austro-Hungarian statesmen. But he added, my real impression is that our Agreements do not interest them very much, except in so far that they form an additional guarantee for the general peace. About the details they do not seem to care at all, and as a matter of fact Austro-Hungarian statesmen are at this moment far too much interested in the result of the negotiations with Hungary and other internal questions to concentrate their minds on any question of general policy.

That which was far more interesting to his mind than the feeling in Austria-Hungary was the manner in which the Agreements had been received in Germany and Russia.

In the former country, where the Agreements could not be expected to be exactly popular, they had been fairly received by the official world, while the Press, without being, except in a few cases, directly hostile, had written of them in bitter-sweet language which had neither surprised nor irritated him. He had expected worse. On the other hand the tone of the Russian Press had come upon him as a most agreeable surprise. He had made up his mind to have to bear the greatest hostility and opposition, but, on the contrary all the articles he had read in papers which he feared the most had, while certainly not particularly friendly, not over-stepped the bounds of legitimate criticism. "Of course" he added "I had prepared the way a little, but you who have been in Russia know how little the Government can do to curb the independence of thought which is characteristic of our leading papers."

Monsieur Isvolsky added that naturally he did not anticipate that he would have an easy time during the next few months and that he had probably much criticism and hostility still to bear and to combat: nevertheless he felt greatly relieved by the

attitude which the portion of the Press most opposed to his policy had adopted up to the present moment.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 169.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/381.

(No. 134.) Confidential.

Vienna, D. October 4, 1907.

Sir,

R. October 7, 1907.

On the 1st instant I had the honour to telegraph to you that a communication had been addressed by the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Governments to the Governments of Bulgaria, Greece and Servia on the subject of the erroneous interpretation placed by the Revolutionary Committees of the Balkan States on Article 3 of the Mürzsteg Programme.

I have now the honour to transmit to you herewith a translation by Mr. Gregory of a communiqué which was published in the "Wiener Zeitung" of the 1st instant, and which contains the text of the instructions sent to the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Representatives at Sofia, Athens and Belgrade on this subject.⁽¹⁾

In speaking to me to-day of the step which has been taken by the two Governments, Monsieur Iswolsky told me that he was glad to have learnt that it had created a most favourable impression not only amongst the other Great Powers who were interested in the work of Reform in Macedonia but also amongst the Governments to whom their communication had been addressed.

I told Monsieur Iswolsky that those Representatives of the Balkan States with whom I had had some conversation on the subject had also expressed to me their satisfaction; but that in each case it had taken the form of satisfaction that the other two States were being more or less called to order, their own particular State having been always quite irreproachable in its dealings with revolutionary bands. His Excellency admitted that I was not far wrong in my opinion but maintained that he had no doubt but that the communication would be taken to heart and have a most salutary effect.

While on this subject Monsieur Iswolsky said that he had always been of the opinion that the loose wording of Article 3 would cause trouble, and that therefore he had taken the first opportunity possible of impressing upon Baron d'Aehrenthal the necessity of explaining its true meaning. The latter had fallen in with his views and he was very glad that the matter, in which, like in everything else, he had encountered some opposition, had been successfully carried through.

As regards Judicial Reforms Monsieur Iswolsky had not much to say. He had found both the Emperor and Baron d'Aehrenthal in a good frame of mind and anxious to avoid unnecessary delay and he had had satisfactory conversations with them on the subject. "But" he said, "the chief thing is after all that we should all remain united and show no divergence of opinion. If the Great Powers are thoroughly at one I do not fear the final outcome of the negotiations with the Sublime Porte. In the opposite case however, and I hear some rather disquieting rumours of attempts on the part of one of the Powers to stiffen the back of the Sultan, we have a heap of trouble before us."

Monsieur Iswolsky spoke with the greatest gratification of his reception in Vienna. He said that he had felt on assuming office that he was regarded with some mistrust

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced here: *v. supra*, p. 111, and *note*.]

and suspicion in Austria-Hungary; he could now at the present moment safely say that if these feelings had existed outside his own imagination they were now completely dispelled.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 170.

Mr. Carnegie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/378.

(No. 152.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. November 8, 1907.

R. November 18, 1907.

As I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 23 of today's date, I saw Baron d'Aehrenthal this afternoon and spoke to him in the sense of your telegram No. 25 of the 6th instant, relative to the judicial reforms in Macedonia. His Excellency said he had telegraphed to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Constantinople on the 5th instant instructing him to make no difficulties about accepting the alternative marked No. 1 in regard to the appointment of the Christian Inspectors in the Austro-Russian scheme if the question of its acceptance was again brought forward at a meeting of the Ambassadors, for, His Excellency remarked, Sir N. O'Connor had in the meantime been making proposals of a different nature. He said that he was however only referring to ancient and very complicated history. He then observed that if the Powers preferred the method suggested by the Russian Government for the appointment of the Christian Inspectors to that suggested by the Austrian, he had of course no alternative but to send the above mentioned instructions to the Austrian Representative at Constantinople.

His Excellency went on to say that he had absolutely no objection to the proposed appointment of a European jurist if a man suitable for the post could be found which he thought would be no easy matter. He had given the Marquis de Pallavicini a free hand in regard to the question.

Baron d'Aehrenthal then again glanced at a French paraphrase of your telegram, which for the sake of convenience I had brought with me, and read aloud the part stating that His Majesty's Government had, at the instance of the French Government in order to secure unanimity among the Powers, abandoned certain proposals respecting the judicial reforms which they had intended to put forward. His Excellency then remarked that His Majesty's Government were certainly doing their best to facilitate the acceptance of the scheme by the Powers.

I have, &c.

LANCELOT D. CARNEGIE.

No. 171.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Salis.

F.O. 371/378.

(No. 331.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 13, 1907.

In the course of my conversation with Herr von Schoen at Windsor last night I spoke on the subject of Judicial Reforms in Macedonia.

I explained that we had put forward nothing at Constantinople except a suggestion for a compromise in case the Russian and Austrian proposal was not accepted. I understood that the Austrians would now accept the Russian alternative. We also would accept this as it stood, in order to secure unanimity.

Herr von Schoen said that Germany's line was to follow Austria and Russia when they were agreed; but he was afraid the Sultan would offer great resistance.

I told him the first thing to be secured was unanimity amongst the Ambassadors, and I hoped this might be done.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 172.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/381.

(No. 751.) Confidential.

Sir,

Pera, D. December 7. 1907.

R. December 16, 1907.

I had the honour of being received in private audience yesterday by the Sultan, who was looking, I may observe in parenthesis, particularly well, without previously assisting as is usual at the ceremony of the Selamlık.

After some remarks in ordinary conversation I referred to the condition of affairs in Macedonia and took the opportunity of reminding His Majesty of the audience last summer when I impressed on him the necessity of suppressing political brigandage in the Macedonian provinces, pointing out at the same time that the regular army was too unwieldly a machine to cope permanently and effectively with such a task and that consequently specially organised gendarmerie corps would be much more useful for the purpose. I said the accuracy of my forecast was proved by the results of the pursuit of political brigands during the last few months and I again urged on His Majesty the absolute necessity, in his own interest and that of the Empire, of finding a remedy for dealing with Macedonian brigandage, which was now rampant in the three provinces. I handed to the Sultan a table of the returns of crime for the recent months showing that while the extraordinary and exceptional efforts of the regular army had succeeded for a time in reducing the number of political murders during August and September, those efforts could not be kept up and were inevitably relaxed with the result that during October political murders steadily increased and had reached in the month the total of 285. Speaking as a civilian and without any pretensions to expert military knowledge I thought the organisation of the force of 80,000 troops kept up in the Roumelian Provinces suffered and their military efficiency was impaired, by the fact that they were split up into small scattered detachments, harassed and worn out by vain attempts to track down and annihilate the mobile and invisible bands which operated in inaccessible mountains by night, while the movements of the regulars were necessarily restricted to the plains and to the day-time. The purpose for which they were employed remained unaccomplished, being one that could only be dealt with by more flexible and adaptable units such as a Gendarmerie force properly officered and trained could alone supply.

The Sultan declared that he fully understood and appreciated the friendly spirit which had prompted me to make this suggestion, that he had during the last three days been occupied with devising special measures to deal with the political brigandage evil, that he would send his Minister for Foreign Affairs to communicate privately to me in writing the result of his decisions on the subject, but that he was firmly convinced, as he had stated last summer, that, no matter what internal measures he took to suppress brigandage, it was certain to recommence as long as the smaller Balkan states cherished aspirations which were mainly nourished by the encouragement and sympathy they met with in certain quarters in Europe; that while the Servians were of little account and the Greeks were perhaps easily dealt with, the Bulgarians were the worst offenders. Their bands were equipped from Bulgaria, officered by Bulgarian officers, well supplied with arms and funds and, I had doubtless heard, of their having recently hanged and done to death with circumstances

of exceptional cruelty a Moslem secret police agent at Monastir. This and similar outrages on the Mahomedans had greatly incensed the latter who could and would also form bands to commit reprisals were they not restrained by the special efforts of the local authorities acting under the directions of His Majesty, who never ceased to give his paternal counsels to his own people (i.e., the Moslems) to exercise the greatest self-restraint despite the grave provocations to which they were exposed. His troops were precluded from searching for hidden arms and acting energetically as their conduct might be open to misconception and they would be represented by the European press as having been guilty of barbarities, &c. His Majesty was strongly of opinion that the only effectual remedy for the situation lay in the friendly European Governments among which he felt he could specially rely upon England, taking energetic action at Athens and Sofia in such a way as to convince the Greek and Bulgarian Governments that Europe would not countenance their action, really inspired as it was, by the desire not of seeing reforms introduced into Macedonia, but of gaining possession of those provinces. His Majesty added with a certain energy that he was not afraid of the Bulgarians or their vaunted army, that his troops had given the Greeks a lesson and he was confident they could similarly enter Sofia despite the guns the Bulgarians had recently purchased in France, but that he was loath to see blood spilt unnecessarily. He declared that he had endeavoured to introduce reforms in the Roumelian provinces and to pacify the country; he was a devout Mussulman and as such had ordered and enjoined all his officials to deal fairly and justly with all classes of the population without distinction of creed or race, but that if his efforts prove ultimately unavailing and the Bulgarians persist in their efforts to realize their real though cloaked designs, he would face the consequences trusting in Allah.

I pointed out to His Majesty that the Powers, and especially England, had months ago and again quite recently addressed the strongest remonstrances to the Governments of Athens and Sofia the latter of which had categorically disclaimed any connection with the actions of Bulgarian bands, though it admitted that the latter, among whom there were deserters from the Bulgarian army, goaded to reprisals by the acts of the Greek bands, were showing a certain independent and sporadic activity despite the efforts of the Bulgarian Government to exercise a restraining influence. I said that matters were moving in a vicious circle and that it was of vital importance that His Majesty, who alone had the power, authority and political sagacity to deal with the matter effectually, should find an immediate remedy for a situation which threatened to lead to grave consequences. Such a remedy, I again begged to urge, lay in the formation of flying columns of gendarmerie and I had recently been informed by Colonel Bonham that with a force of from 5,000 to 7,000 gendarmes, in addition to the existing force, the Macedonian provinces could be completely rid of the brigandage scourge, while the regular troops could be spared and kept intact for the defence of the country in case of a national emergency.

The Sultan said he would give the matter his urgent attention and communicate the result by Monday through his Minister for Foreign Affairs but again repeated his belief that the only effective remedy lay in the Powers taking energetic steps at Athens and Sofia. The Powers, he said, were too ready to accept the disclaimers of the Bulgarian Government, while Prince Ferdinand made frequent tours in Europe, going the rounds of the capitals endeavouring to enlist sympathy for the Bulgarian cause. The Bulgarian protestations of innocence, the versions of incidents circulated by them, press comments and suggestions about ameliorating the condition of the provinces in question were, His Majesty remarked with a certain bitterness of tone, "mere comedy," the real issue being the designs of Bulgaria for territorial aggrandisement.

I pointed out to the Sultan the great significance and advantage of having the Powers interested in the administration of Macedonia. Their co-operation in the work of reform would necessarily oblige them to oppose any attempt to disturb the *status quo* whereas some years ago if any such attempt had been made they might

have looked on with a certain apathy. His Majesty seemed impressed by this remark but again expressed a hope that the Powers would continue to exercise pressure at Athens and Sofia, observing that if they made as energetic representations at those capitals as at Constantinople it would suffice.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

P.S. *December 10.*—I beg to add that though no message has come to me from the Sultan through the Minister for Foreign Affairs I learn that on Saturday His Imperial Majesty discussed the matter at length with the Grand Vizier and later on in the same day with the Minister of War. To-day however His Majesty sent me a message to the effect that he had decided to increase the number of troops who were engaged in the pursuit of the brigands and was considering other messages which would be communicated to me later on.

N. R. O'C.

No. 173.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 371/381.

(No. 116.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 13, 1907.

I told Count Mensdorff to-day that instructions had been sent to Sir Nicholas O'Connor to sign the Joint Note about Judicial Reforms in Macedonia.

We understood the general opinion to be that an Adviser ought to be chosen who should be of European nationality; but as there was difficulty about putting this in the Note we had agreed to sign the Note as it was.

I learnt, however, that things in Macedonia were worse than ever: worse, it seemed to me, than they had yet been since I came into Office; and I thought the Powers must really consider what other proposals could be made in order to put a stop to the killing of the various nationalities by each other. The Turkish troops either could not or would not end these outrages, and when they did happen to show energy they could not be trusted to keep within bounds. The only way in which things could be improved was by making use of the Gendarmerie under European Officers. Sir N. O'Connor had spoken to the Sultan in this sense at an interview in the summer, pointing out that a mobile column of Gendarmerie would be able to dispose of the bands. The Sultan had listened, but there had been no result.

Therefore, I thought we should be well advised to consider what more could be done, for if things were already as bad as they were at this season they would be very much worse next year.

Count Mensdorff promised to report to his Government what I had said.⁽¹⁾

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [For the German influences on Austria-Hungary's attitude *v. G.P. XXII*, especially p. 455 *sqq.*]

No. 174.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir^e N. O'Connor.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear O'Connor,

December 17, 1907.

Things at Constantinople look very bad, and it seems to me quite clear that a conciliatory policy has no effect whatever.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

The Sultan might have taken advantage of the fair tone of my speech about Macedonia in the summer to accept your suggestion as to making a better use of the Gendarmerie, or any other suggestion which would improve matters. But he has not done so, and the result is that things in Macedonia are worse than ever.

Later on, we allowed the Admiral to pay his usual visit of courtesy: but no good result has followed from that.

The Oil Concession, about which you were hopeful, has not been granted. The Quays Company, in which there is known to be a British interest, is being obstructed. Our representations about the Persian Frontier have been cynically disregarded. And there is general evidence, in big things and in little, of indifference, if not of ill-will.

It is quite evident that we must go on another tack, and I am considering what our policy should be.

I do not wish you to keep nagging away about small points connected with Macedonia or any other matters which cannot be settled by small things. You might select one or two commercial matters, such as the Quays Company, on which to concentrate and keep up steady pressure. Meanwhile, I shall bring the Macedonian question to a head by asking the Powers whether they will consent to press for executive control and increase of the Gendarmerie. Judicial reforms being now, as I understand, settled, and there being nothing to do but to wait for the reply of the Porte, which will no doubt be unsatisfactory. I shall not press for co-ercive measures with regard to judicial reforms alone, seeing that they will not cure the chief evils of Macedonia. Nor am I prepared, as regards Macedonia, to resort to co-ercive measures without the consent of the other Powers.

My policy would be to invite the other Powers to join us in putting forward some thorough-going scheme of reforms which would really be effective, and force the Porte to accept the Scheme. If the Powers would not do this, I should then state the fact in Parliament, and say that there was nothing more to be done as long as they were of this mind.

If the Concert does resort to co-ercive measures, we must settle the Persian Frontier question and some other things at the same time.

If it does not, I do not see that Russia can press us to resort to co-ercive measures about the Persian Frontier alone.

I am somewhat disturbed that so little is being done at the Customs Houses and in the reform of the Customs Administration generally. We may have to raise with the Porte the question as to whether we can continue our consent to the levy of the increased Customs Dues if the conditions as to improvements are not fulfilled.

I hope you feel that your French Colleague gives you full support about the Quays Company when required. I shall be quite ready to help you in any way I can about that whenever you need assistance, and the Turks should be made to feel that their obstruction with regard to it is resented by us.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 175.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

F.O. 371/381.

Tel. (No. 189.)

Foreign Office, December 21, 1907.

D. 3.10 P.M.

Your desp[atch] No. 761.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have waited for many months in the hope that Y[our] E[xcellency's] frequent representations to the Sultan on this subject would bear fruit. They are unable to postpone taking action any longer which they would much rather have avoided and are now on the point of addressing the Powers in a

Circular Note⁽¹⁾ on the question of increasing the Gendarmerie and giving the officers executive control.

⁽¹⁾ [This refers to the circular of December 18 demanding more effective control for the gendarmerie in Macedonia, the organization of a mobile force of gendarmerie (ultimately fixed at 12,000 men), and the reduction of the Turkish garrison in Macedonia. This is published in *A. & P.* (1908), CXXV, (*Cd.* 3958), pp. 589-90.]

No. 176.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Sir Edward Grey,

Constantinople, December 25, 1907.

I beg to thank you for your letter of the 17th inst.⁽²⁾ received on Saturday by Mess[enge]r.

I have felt for some time past that if nothing came of the earnest representations I made to the Sultan after receipt of your letter of the 11th July⁽³⁾ and subsequently on a recent occasion you would be compelled to come forward with some definite and drastic proposals with a view to stopping the interracial outrages and massacres which are making a carnage ground of the Macedonian provinces while no serious effort is made by the Turks to restore order and tranquillity. I was anxious however that you should be fully informed of the reception it would meet with from the Powers so far as I could judge of it from the attitude of their representatives here. The communication of your Memo[randum] to the different Governments on the 18th inst. has I fear deprived my remarks of their value and makes them at most of academic interest.

I do not as yet know what answer the Government have made to your proposals but I have not the least doubt that the Austrians will reply—at the very least—that the proposal is premature and that it would not be well to overload the coach while we are driving on the judicial path. B[aro]n d'Erenthal [*sic*] takes his cue from Berlin far more than Goluchowsky and the Austro-Russian understanding in regard to the Balkans is being proportionately weakened. The Kaiser will not be persuaded to worry the Sultan so long as he gains such distinct advantages by his present complacent policy, or at any rate before He sees a distinct gain either by an understanding with us or in the shape of some positive *quid pro quo*.

The Russians would be glad to please us in the hope of compensation on the Turco-Russian Frontier question, but in their present parlous position they cannot afford to break off their understanding with Austria before they know for certain what Germany is after.

Italy is always ready to make professions of good will, but here, at least, she is following in the wake of Germany.

France like Italy will approve of your proposals in principle, but her financial interests, Heraclea Coal Concessions &c. &c. will enjoin caution to say nothing more.

However although I do not think your proposals are likely to be accepted by the Powers, at all events at present, I am not sorry that you have made them judging the matter even from a local standpoint. They can hardly fail to inspire the Sultan with a certain fear of what you may say or do in the future and I don't believe there is any other influence of much avail with His Majesty unless you openly espouse his cause like the Germans. . . .⁽⁴⁾

Believe me,

Y[ou]rs very faithfully,

N. R. O'CONNOR.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 219-20, No. 174.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 205-6, No. 162.]

⁽⁴⁾ [The rest of this letter is omitted as it deals with other matters.]

No. 177.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear O'Connor,

December 30, 1907.

I hope you do not mind this less formal style of address, and will adopt it.

I am glad you do not see objections to my proposal to the Powers about Gendarmerie. I was prepared to receive dilatory answers about it at first, but the situation in Macedonia is so bad that I could not in decency refrain from proposing something and making some effort to improve it.

When the Turks refuse the Judicial Reform proposals and the question arises of what step the Powers are to take I shall again urge that they should either put forward and press something worth carrying, such as this about the Gendarmerie, or allow me to say in Parliament that they see objections to doing anything more.

I am not prepared to break up the Concert, but neither am I willing to pretend in Parliament that the Powers are going to do something, when they are not.

You will see that I have also asked Russia and Austria what else they can suggest to control the bands of the rival nationalities.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

No. 178.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 212/4/08/44.

(No. 796.)

Sir,

Pera, D. December 30, 1907.

R. January 3, 1908.

With reference to my telegram No. 179 of yesterday transmitting to you the joint telegram which the Ambassadors agreed in the afternoon to send to their respective Governments and advising you that we had prepared a note for presentation to the Sublime Porte to-day again insisting upon compliance with our request for the renewal of the mandates of the Agents of reform in Macedonia, I have now the honour to enclose a copy of this communication.⁽¹⁾

There was entire agreement between the Ambassadors as to the nature and terms of the note to the Porte which we thought it desirable to send in without delay but as we felt at the same time that it would be unbecoming to continue this exchange of notes in case the Porte continued to be recalcitrant, we thought it necessary to advise our Governments of the situation of affairs and of the possibility of the Porte obstinately resisting our demands for the renewal of the powers of the Agents of reforms so long as they were likely to be confronted with proposals respecting judicial reforms.

Monsieur Constans who had an audience of the Sultan on Friday said that His Majesty had stated in the most positive and categorical manner that it was impossible for them to agree to foreign control of the judicial administration without seriously discontenting all his Mussulman subjects and without a loss of authority and prestige which would be dangerous to himself and to his Empire in general.

He begged Monsieur Constans to use his influence with his colleagues to prevent them from insisting on these demands which he considered absolutely irreconcilable with his vital interests averring at the same time that he had no intention of interfering with the progress of the reforms which would not in any way be disturbed by their agents being taken into the Imperial service.

Monsieur Constans said that he stated in reply that it was beyond his power to attempt to influence his colleagues in the manner suggested by His Imperial Majesty inasmuch as he himself as well as the other Ambassadors were acting under direct

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

instructions from their Governments and that moreover he did not consider that His Majesty had anything to fear from the progress of the reforms which had already considerably alleviated the situation of affairs throughout the Roumelian provinces where their beneficent effect would be felt still more as time went on.

The Sultan was unwilling to accept the Ambassador's view and reiterated that he would not consent to the introduction by the Powers of the scheme of judicial reforms.

Monsieur Constans added that from the language of the Sultan he thought we must be prepared for an obstinate resistance on the part of His Majesty and that it was highly improbable that we should persuade His Majesty to accept the judicial reforms without recourse to coercive measures.

After considerable discussion among ourselves we came to the opinion that the proposal of the Porte to take the foreign Agents into their service was intimately connected with the judicial reforms scheme and used by His Majesty as a means of putting constraint upon the Powers in favour of its abandonment.

This seemed more apparent still upon Monsieur Constans informing us that the Sultan had told him he had himself telegraphed direct to the Inspector General to continue the sittings of the Financial Commission.

(Confidential.)

With regard to the attitude of my colleagues, that of the German Ambassador, Baron von Marschall, was entirely satisfactory and in striking contrast to the line of action which he had followed in regard to the financial reforms as well as to the reorganisation of the gendarmerie. The French Ambassador was content to show that he considered that the Governments were entering upon a very difficult course which would not lead to effective results without serious difficulty. The Russian Ambassador stoutly advocated the necessity of adherence to the programme of Müzzsteg in which he had my entire support while at the same time I pointed out that I did not consider the Sultan was at present in a position lightly to incur the ill-will of the Great Powers or in a state to resist if he clearly understood that we were determined to insist at any cost upon our demands.

The Italian was ready to agree to any proposal emanating from his German colleague but being unprepared for his correct attitude he merely harped on the difficulties which we had to expect from the determined opposition of the Sultan. The Austrian seemed to be paralysed and afraid of any decision which might compromise the negative attitude of his Government at this moment. His Excellency remained silent while the Russian Ambassador dilated upon the necessity of upholding the Müzzsteg programme and seemed to be looking for a cue from the German Ambassador which he did not get.

In replying to my question as to whether he was now authorised by his Government to sign the judicial note, he made no attempt to explain the cause of delay and simply replied in the negative. I confess he left me under the impression that possibly his Government might be considering the expediency of holding up at all events for the present the note to the Porte respecting judicial reforms.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

⁽²⁾ [Baron von Marschall defines his opposition to judicial reform in a secret despatch of 24th December, 1907, to Prince Bülow; *v. G.P.*, XXII, pp. 471-9.]

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

*British Embassy, Constantinople,
January 1, 1908.*

My dear Sir Edward Grey,

From Yildiz on the Hill the Sultan is tempting my colleagues in the hope of persuading them to renounce the judicial Reforms scheme. Two days ago he sent the Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] to see M. Zinoviev. He said that it was only England who was intent upon the project, that *four* of the Powers were ready to abandon it and he earnestly besought M. Zinoviev, for the friendship he bore him and the good will he had shown to him during the Japanese war, not to refuse his request. He begged him to approach his Gov[ernmen]t on the subject. Mons[ieur] Zinoviev replied that his Gov[ernmen]t was jointly responsible with Austria for the Mürzsteg Programme, that he was himself convinced that its execution was of vital importance to the integrity of the Ottoman Empire and the preservation of peace, and that neither he nor his Gov[ernmen]t would deviate from the course which had been laid down and put forward with the approval of the Great Powers. The Sultan evidently thinks it useless to approach me on the subject and has not ventured on any communication to me. If the five Powers or even four of them were as determined as we are I have not the least doubt today, any more than I had some three months ago (see my despatch No. 671) that H[is] M[ajesty] would yield to our demands without our being obliged to recourse to coercive measures. He is still gauging the situation. He counts on Germany. He thinks he need anticipate no serious opposition from Italy. He believes he can win over the French Amb[assado]r by certain concessions tho[ugh] he may have difficulty with the French Gov[ernmen]t. He hopes that Austria will be influenced by Germany. In fact as long as he has the faintest hope of effecting a breach in the concert he will persist in his present policy. Such is the situation, in a few words, as it appears to me today.

Arising out of it comes the question as to whether the Powers are likely to agree to coercion. I confess it does not seem probable—*mais nous verrons*.

I had a talk with my Austrian Colleague a few days ago and tried in vain to extract from him the reason for his Gov[ernmen]t delaying to agree to the presentation of the judicial Note. He said that he believed they were anxious to restore the exact wording of the formula (No. 1) agreed to by the Powers, but it is hardly conceivable that this alone w[oul]d have delayed matters for three weeks. He assured me however that they had no idea of proposing to hold up the judicial Note and if this be so the supposition upon which I ventured in the last paragraph of my despatch No. 798 is wrong.

With all good wishes for the New Year,

Believe me,

Yours very faithfully.

N. R. O'CONNOR.

P.S.—I had just finished this Note when Tewfik Pasha called. He said the Sultan had already sent him to the other Ambassadors that H[is] M[ajesty] hesitated to send him to me as he felt it would be useless; but that on further consideration he told him he had better see me.

Tewfik said H[is] M[ajesty] hoped I would try to persuade my Gov[ernmen]t to accept his proposal for taking into his service the Foreign Agents of the Reforms &c. &c.

I said it would be quite impossible for me to propose such a thing to my Gov[ernmen]t, that it was tantamount to the renunciation of the whole project of

(1) [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

reforms as accepted by the Powers, and that the mere fact of the Sultan making such a proposal at this hour would, I feared, have a deplorable effect. But apart from this I was convinced that the only chance of warding off complications in the future lay in the Sultan doing all in his power loyally to execute the reforms and in taking measures to re-establish order and tranquillity throughout the Balkan states.

Tewfik Pasha gave me to understand that his calling on me was little more than a formality. I told him not to mince matters with the Sultan but to clearly explain to H[is] M[ajesty] that it was not only impossible for me to put forward the request but that it was my personal conviction that if I did so I could not render a worse service to H[is] I[mperial] M[ajesty.] I don't know if I have made it clear that the imme[di]ate preoccupation of the Sultan is the question of taking the Agents of Reforms into his service reserving the judicial Reforms for a subsequent struggle.

I think H[is] M[ajesty] will give way about the Foreign Agents of Reforms when he finds our line unbroken.

N. R. O'C.

No. 180.

(a.)

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

Pera, January 2, 1908.

F. 201/4/08/44.

D. 8.25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 1.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs called on me yesterday by order of the Sultan to ask me to request His Majesty's Government to accept proposal of Porte to take foreign agents reform into their service and pay.

I absolutely declined on the ground that it would upset scheme of reforms known as the Mürzsteg programme accepted by all the Powers, and that even were I willing it would be the worst service I could render to the Sultan, as the loyal execution of reforms was in my opinion the only hope of preventing serious complications and dangers at no very distant date.

No. 180.

(b.)

Sir N. R. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

British Embassy, Constantinople,

My dear Sir Edward,

February 4, 1908.

I am grateful for your letter of the 30th Dec[ember]⁽²⁾ and while greatly appreciating the less formal style of address which you use I hope you will let me keep mine towards you as it represents best the feeling of respectful affection towards a kind and indulgent Chief.

The Judicial Reforms scheme does not look promising and I am sorry we did not get in our Note on the lines proposed at the meeting of Sep[tember] 21st.

I think it is now pretty certain that the Austrians have got their price in the extension of their Railway to Mitrovitz and that they will neither propose nor join in coercive measures to enforce the judicial scheme of Reforms. The Germans no doubt helped them. The Italians are taking their cue from Berlin as far as may be in the absurd hope that in this way they will make more headway in Tripoli. The French have their financial interests &c. to look after. The Russians are depressed and anxious about their *entente* with Austria. As a matter of fact none of the Ambassadors

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 222, No. 177.]

have personally tackled the Sultan and they are evidently not prepared to do so without direct and categorical instructions. I touched on the question of Judicial reforms when speaking about the Gendarmerie, but I saw no use in falling foul of the Sultan unless my colleagues moved too. We shall probably all the same agree tomorrow to send in the Judicial Note. If the Porte refuses to discuss the question the *impasse* will be serious. If it merely procrastinates we shall in time get what is best and most feasible in the scheme and I have earnestly sought B[aro]n von Marshall's support to this end pointing out that a positive refusal will seriously compromise the whole scheme of reforms and place the Sultan in a very precarious position between the offended European Powers and his discontented subjects.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 181.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 4778/4/08/44.

(No. 62.)

Sir,

Pera, D. February 7, 1908.

R. February 11, 1908.

I have the honour to report that a meeting of the Ambassadors was held at the German Embassy on the afternoon of the 5th instant, all being present, when after a preliminary debate in regard to the renewal of the mandates of the European officials in Macedonia, which I am reporting separately, a discussion took place as to the presentation of the note on Judicial Reforms.

The Russian and Austrian Ambassadors declared that they were instructed to sign and present it, I said that I had the same instructions and that my Government were anxious that there should be no further delay. The French and Italian Ambassadors said they were also authorised to sign.

Baron von Marschall said that he considered that we were asking the Sultan to agree to what was absolutely inconsistent with his position as Caliph, his prestige and credit and in fact his sovereignty. His Excellency was opposed to the conditions and terms of the note and to many of its clauses which he thought juridically faulty and unacceptable. Then ensued a minute examination of the note, resulting in several alterations made at the instance of Baron von Marschall, but no clear understanding was arrived at as to the adoption of the Austrian in preference to the Russian formula, which he strongly advocated, on the ground that it was unreasonable to distinguish in a Mahomedan country between the mode of nomination of the Moslem and Christian Inspectors, and to have the former dependent upon the Ottoman Government and the latter upon the International Commission. It was pointed out that this was the inevitable result of a foreign control and that, if the Commission had not Inspectors who were dependent upon them, and upon whom they could rely, they would lose all power of correcting the abuses in the judicial administration which was the main object in view.

Baron von Marschall however maintained his views and a deadlock was apparent. I then dwelt upon the importance which you attached to the presentation of the note and on the grave responsibility which the Porte would assume if it rejected it in a peremptory way, as was foreshadowed by my German, French and Italian colleagues, so as to close the door to further negotiations, and I stated that I did not myself believe the Porte would take up this attitude and I held that the note should be presented.

The Russian, Austrian, French and Italian Ambassadors repeated that they had instructions to sign the note but none of them except the Russian, and he faint-heartedly, supported its immediate presentation to the Porte. Thereupon Baron von Marschall declared that he too was authorised to sign the note, but that he could not support it either at the Palace or the Porte later on, although he would not

repudiate his signature by saying anything against its acceptance. He added that it was his firm conviction that the Sultan would absolutely refuse within forty-eight hours to accept the proposals of the Ambassadors.

The other Ambassadors considered that this attitude placed them in a difficult position and greatly altered the situation, as the Porte would probably be emboldened to reject demands which it understood were not supported by the Doyen of the Diplomatic Body.

I did not see my way, in face of the negative attitude of the Russian and Austrian Ambassadors to put myself forward and assume on behalf of His Majesty's Government all the responsibility of presenting demands which the rest of my colleagues considered would be certain to be refused, and would place their Governments in the unpleasant position of having to accept the rebuff of the Porte or decide on the employment of coercion.

Baron von Marschall then suggested that, if we thought proper, we should submit to our respective Governments a proposal to suspend for a fixed period our scheme of judicial reform, in order to see how the reforms lately introduced by the Ottoman Government really worked, and on condition that the present Ottoman Commissioners communicated their reports to the International Financial Commission, and that it was clearly understood that this arrangement depended on the renewal of the mandates of all the European Reform Agents throughout Macedonia.

After some further discussion at which dark pictures were drawn of the predicament in which the Governments would find themselves on the refusal of the Porte, and in view of the fact that the Governments had not agreed, at all events up to the present moment, on the employment of coercion, the joint telegram was drafted which I had the honour to transmit to you the same evening.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 182.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Foreign Office, February 8, 1908.

Tel.

D. 4.50 P.M.

Postponement of note on Judicial Reforms, and the spirit displayed by the Powers respecting it, seems equivalent to abandonment of all hope of progress in Macedonian Reforms. I am intending to send a circular telegram to the Powers next week in this sense, pointing out that responsibility for disastrous consequences of such an attitude rests with them. We should be careful to make it clear that we have no responsibility for this; though it may be useless for us to press further for presentation of Judicial Reforms note against their will.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

No. 183.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

Constantinople, February 9, 1908.

Private.⁽¹⁾

D. 3.32 P.M.

Tel.

R. 4.30 P.M.

Your private telegram of last night.⁽²⁾

I am not surprised at your annoyance at turn things took on Wednesday and I think Powers will quite understand your showing it provided you say nothing to break

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

⁽²⁾ [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

up the concert. But the postponement of the judicial reforms—*pace* the Balkan Committee—does not materially alter general political situation in Macedonia or affect the progress of existing reforms assuming that mandates are renewed. As a matter of fact there are surprisingly few complaints of judicial abuses. I am afraid however that a circular announcing that you had given up all hope of progress of Macedonian reform will distress Russia who has been loyal throughout negotiations and so annoy Austria as to throw her more towards Germany besides producing a dangerous effect in the Balkan Peninsula.

No. 184.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear O'Connor,

February 10, 1908.

It appeared to me, even before I got your private letter, that Austria had played the mean game of driving a bargain with the Porte in favour of her railway scheme at the expense of Macedonian Reform. It seems, now, that we are to be in the position of having all the odium at Constantinople of pressing reforms, while other members of the Concert curry favour with the Porte by obstructing them.

I regard this as making me free to say whatever I please on the subject. If there was any prospect of improving matters in Macedonia by holding my peace, there would be a reason for my doing so: but there is none.

I am sending you a very rough draft of part of a Despatch which I intend to submit to the Cabinet and, if approved by them, to circulate to the Powers. The first part of the Despatch will consist of an answer "ad hoc" to the Russian and Austrian reply to me about the Gendarmerie proposals, and that is being drawn up in the Department.

I intend to publish a Blue-Book, presently, ending with this Despatch; and I should like you to see the draft first, before anything is finally settled, and hear what you think of the line which it is proposed to take: whether you think it would do any harm, or whether you can suggest any course more likely to do good.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40. The Blue Book referred to is apparently *Cd.* 3958, presented to Parliament in March 1908, *A. & P.* (1908), CXXV, pp. 587-96.]

No. 185.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, February 14, 1908.

F.O. 5181/4/08/44A.

D. 8.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 6.) Confidential.

R. 11.30 P.M.

Your telegram, No. 4, 12th February.⁽¹⁾

Have just delivered your message to Minister for Foreign Affairs, who could not receive me yesterday. He entirely agrees with you view, and considers suspension of note entirely unacceptable. He has impressed this view on Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, but has received no answer yet. His Excellency's idea is that note should be signed and presented as soon as possible, but that once presented the Powers should concentrate their efforts upon obtaining prolongations of mandates. On this point there could be no difference of opinion between any of the Powers, and concert would be maintained. As regards pacification of Macedonia, which he agrees is the principal point, after giving his chief reasons against the gendarmerie proposal, namely, that its execution would take too much time, he suggests that you should bring forward

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

another proposal, or that the Porte should be pressed to put their proposal of flying columns into immediate execution.

He also asked whether it would not be possible for you to introduce into your speech a warning to the bands that if they persist in their present action the Powers will cease from their efforts on behalf of Macedonian Christian population. I said that I would deliver his message, but asked whether such a public declaration might not provide Turkey with a motive to excite bands to further excesses. He rather agreed, but would wish you to consider the point.

In reply to a question from me, he stated that in his recent speeches he had called attention to fact that Macedonian Christians would be the chief sufferers should excesses of bands continue.

No. 186.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

British Embassy, Constantinople,

My dear Sir Edward,

February 18, 1908.

Many thanks for your letter of the 10th⁽²⁾ and its inclosures.

I think you have knocked the Austrian and Russian arguments against your Gendarmerie scheme to "smithereens" as we say in Ireland. But neither of them preferred their real objections, which in the case of Austria is that she does not want far reaching and effective reforms which would be destructive of her political hopes and aspirations, and in that of Russia of admitting that the Big Brother should shoot the Little Slav Brother. This latter objection was not however insuperable, for the Foreign Officers need not necessarily be combatants.

I think, if I may venture to say so, the first part of your Draft is forcible and unexceptionable and will strike the public as a vigorous and practical effort to cope with a very difficult state of things.

The second part is more serious, and, as you are good enough to send it to me, you will expect me to speak openly and to say what I think.

If you deem it expedient for parliamentary reasons to recur to the proposal of a Governor-General appointed for a fixed period by the Powers independent of the Sultan, I see no objection though I dare say the malcontents will notice that, whereas Lord Lansdowne proposed that the Governor should be a Christian, you are satisfied at his being a Mussulman. What I am afraid of is that these drastic proposals, though eminently desirable in themselves, are almost certain, not only to be rejected at this moment by the other Powers, but to be resented as calculated to widen still further the cleavage in the concert, and in any case the proposal to join *with one or more of the Powers* would, I think, be an unfortunate phrase. If I thought there was the faintest chance of their being accepted by even five of the Powers I should strongly support them, but as I think the contrary will be the case I confess I look with anxiety to our taking a line which must necessarily not only alienate the Sultan, but gravely affront Moslem feeling throughout the whole of Turkey. I have never objected to proposals which I thought would merely antagonise the Sultan, from whose favour we get so few material advantages, but we have now to look beyond the present régime and to take heed of Moslem prejudices and feelings so far as we possibly can if we wish to avoid encouraging an anti-British feeling in the minds of the vast majority of the Moslems throughout the Empire who are still in the main friendly to England. After all the Macedonian question is a temporary embroglio which will find its solution one way or another without, I hope, involving Europe in serious complications, but any line of policy that might alienate the sympathy of the Mussulman population of

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 228, No. 184.]

Turkey might be far reaching in its effects and for this reason I venture to think that every step in this direction deserves the most careful consideration.

The Novi Bazar-Mitrovitzá Railway incident has given a severe shock to the Austro-Russian entente and it will require a good deal of diplomacy to get the two Powers back into line again. Zinoviev is furious and characterises it as an act of treason, while Pallavicini says that the Russians were informed a month previously and made no objection and that the concession did not in any way alter or affect their Balkan policy. The coincidence of the unusually complaisant attitude of the Sultan and the hesitation of the Austrians to advocate pressure upon the Porte was at all events so striking that I fear all the water in the Bosphorus will not wash out the stain.

Believe me,

Yours very sincerely,

N. R. O'CONOR.

No. 187.

Extract from Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1908.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir G. Lowther, No. 105, of February 17, 1909.—
Received February 22, 1909.)

Last year my predecessor reported fully on the scheme of Judicial reforms in Macedonia, and it therefore seems unnecessary to give more than the merest outlines of the wearisome and eventually futile negotiations between the Powers, which culminated in an identic telegram from the Ambassadors here to their Governments, advising that the note should be abandoned for the time being, and that the reforms of the judiciary, which the Porte had instituted and which, as pointed out in last year's Report, had not been without effect, should be given a trial.

The cause of the delay in the signing and presentation of the note was in the first place due to the attitude of the Austrian Government, who found objections to the clause relative to the appointment of the Christian Judicial Inspectors, and they stated quite early in January that if one or two small and entirely unimportant amendments were made, the Austrian Ambassador would be authorized to sign the note without delay; however when the amendments were made known, Sir Nicholas O'Connor found that they left a certain doubt as to whether the actual appointment of the Christian Inspectors was to be made by the Financial Commission, and a further delay ensued.

Meanwhile the Porte was maintaining an obstinate attitude on the subject of the renewal of the mandates of the foreign Agents of reform in Macedonia, the strongly worded note from the Representatives of the Powers⁽¹⁾ being met by a variety of arguments in favour of the Porte's suggestion, and they maintained their attitude in spite of the complete unanimity of the six Powers. Meanwhile the negotiations between the Austrian Embassy and the Porte were no doubt being carried on secretly, and the German Ambassador showed that he had no intention of pressing the note on the Porte, even if he signed it, which at one time seemed doubtful, and the Italian Ambassador was extremely plain-spoken regarding the opposition which he said was to be expected. Finally, at a meeting of Ambassadors held on the 5th February, all the foreign Ambassadors stated that though they were authorized to sign the note, they were not in favour of presenting it at once, not even the Russian Ambassador supporting Sir Nicholas O'Connor, except in a most half-hearted manner, when he spoke in favour of its prompt presentation, and it was agreed to draft an identic telegram suggesting that the note be held up to see whether the good effects of the Turkish reforms were maintained.⁽²⁾ This telegram synchronized with the issue of an Imperial

⁽¹⁾ [The first communication, demanding the renewal of mandates, was sent on 15th December, 1907.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 226-7, No. 181.]

Irâdê for the preliminary survey of the projected Sanjak Railway, with the details of which I have dealt under the heading of "Railways."

The news of the issue of this Irâdê aroused great indignation in Russia, where charges of ill-faith on the part of Austria were freely made; while you expressed the view that though you were generally in favour of railway development in the Balkans you could not but regard the moment for pressing this scheme as decidedly ill-chosen.

Considerable discussion followed the receipt of the identic telegram from the Ambassadors, and Baron d'Aehrenthal expressed great annoyance at the course events had taken and even suggested that the note should still be presented,⁽³⁾ but it was eventually allowed to drop (whereupon the Porte immediately gave way on the subject of the mandates), as His Majesty's Government inclined to the view that it was of no great utility to present a scheme that would require great pressure on the Porte, and which, even if the Powers could be induced to bring this pressure to bear, would not touch the chief evil from which Macedonia was suffering, namely, the bands.

Meanwhile, the Russian and Austrian Governments had rejected the proposals formulated by His Majesty's Government for extending the gendarmerie and giving the European officers executive command against the bands;⁽⁴⁾ there was thus no scheme for improving the situation in Macedonia, which had greatly deteriorated, and it was more than probable that the activity of the bands would on the approach of spring be greater than it ever had been. It had transpired that the main objection of the Russian Government to the British scheme had been their dislike to the idea of Russian officers being employed actively against their Slav brothers; our proposals were consequently modified, and on the 3rd March you sent a Circular despatch to the Governments of the Great Powers proposing the appointment of a semi-independent Governor of Macedonia, the extension of the gendarmerie, and a corresponding reduction of the troops in Macedonia, and suggesting that, to make this latter proposal less unacceptable to the Sultan, a guarantee against foreign attack should be given for as long as the arrangement lasted, while the constitution of the Financial Commission would be modified, and its powers amplified. Correspondence ensued with the Russian Government into none of the details of which it is necessary to enter, except those regarding the gendarmerie, as the other proposals never took any very definite shape, owing to the fact that the Russian Government agreed to the proposals of His Majesty's Government to separate the gendarmerie proposals from the others in order to submit them as soon as possible to the other Powers. The negotiations had so far progressed that in the middle of June His Majesty's Government were in a position to submit a draft Note to the Russian Government, which was accepted in principle, and was also accorded a satisfactory reception by the other Powers. However, before the negotiations reached their final stage, the revolution broke out in Turkey, and the British and Russian Governments dropped the matter when it was seen that the new régime was firmly established.

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 228, No. 185.]

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. A. & P.* (1908), CXXV, (*Id.* 3958), pp. 590-1.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The Young Turkish Revolution broke out in the third week of July, and caused the abandonment of the gendarmerie, judicial and other reforms, *v. infra* p. 251, and p. 308, No. 212.]

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE STATE VISIT OF KING EDWARD TO CZAR NICHOLAS AT REVAL, 9-10TH JUNE, 1908.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following despatches show the beginning of the Anglo-Russian *rapprochement* over Macedonia, a tendency which Germany viewed with much alarm, and which culminated in King Edward's State visit to Reval, *v. G.P.* XXV, II, chs. 188 and 189.]

No. 188.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 7121/6/08/44 A.

(No. 85.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. February 18, 1908.

R. March 2, 1908.

The demand that Russia should now abandon her co-operation with Austria-Hungary and range herself on the side of the Western Powers in the question of Macedonian reforms may be said to be practically universal in the press and it is, I understand, backed up by the great body of public opinion. I have every reason to believe that the above view is shared also by the Russian Government, and that it may before long take a more practical form. It would indeed be difficult for the Government, even if their opinions did not coincide with those of the public, to resist the strong feeling which has been manifested here. It is by no means a sudden and passing outburst of popular feeling, but there is a deep-rooted conviction that a continued co-operation with Austria-Hungary and Germany, for these two Powers are considered as identical, in Balkan questions must inevitably lead to a sacrifice of Slav interests, and that Russia would then have played the unworthy part of a dupe. Confidence in the sincerity of Austria-Hungary has been destroyed, and even in authoritative quarters it is considered that the two above-named Powers are carrying into execution a prearranged plan by which Austria, though still simulating a desire to promote reforms, seizes the opportunity to secure for herself special advantages while Germany undertakes the duty of blocking reforms and of keeping the Porte in a good humour in order that both her projects and those of Austria may be favourably considered by the Sultan.

There may be some exaggeration in this view, but it is one which is now received without question in official and other quarters, while there are, it is maintained, appearances which fully justify it, and there is consequently a strongly expressed desire that the Russian Government should take an entirely new departure in their policy in the Near East. In official circles there is every wish to accelerate the execution of reforms in Macedonia, and to safeguard and protect the interests of the Slav populations: and, in order to attain those ends it is considered necessary to range alongside those Powers who are animated with the same intentions. It is to Great Britain that the Russian public, and I might perhaps also add the Russian Government, now look as being the coadjutor best adapted to further the cause of justice and of peace in Macedonia, and it is expected that with her co-operation and that of the ally France and perhaps also of Italy, it would be possible to form a combination which would be enabled to induce the Sublime Porte to subscribe to those measures which are indisputably essential. There is, at least in responsible quarters no desire to break up the European concert. On the contrary it is admitted that unity of action and of aims is eminently to be desired; but among the six Powers there are two who, it is thought, are clearly not whole hearted in their insistence on those reforms which the other four Powers are sincerely desirous to see introduced. The chief initiative and main impulse must therefore come from the latter, and the policy

towards the Sublime Porte must be so framed as to lead to the least possible resistance on the part of the Sultan. It is, I think, felt that the attempt to force upon the Sultan the acceptance of measures which are to him distasteful is not likely to have any satisfactory results, as it would be difficult in view of the reluctance of some to associate themselves in the task to exercise such pressure as would compel an unwilling compliance. It would consequently be advisable to put forward reform measures in a form which would render them acceptable to the Sultan and ensure their being carried into execution. As to the character of the measures themselves, and the manner in which they should be presented, it is left to the several Governments to decide.

Such in brief are the views which, so far as I have been able to ascertain, are prevalent here, and I think that the future development of Russian policy as regards Macedonian reforms will proceed on the lines which I have indicated.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 189.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, March 4, 1908.

I have had some conversations with Iswolsky since the arrival of the special messenger with your letters and views as to the Macedonian question. I find that he does not much like the idea of a Gov[erno]r Gen[era]l. His view is that we are dealing with three Vilayets, each administered by a Vali or Gov[erno]r G[enera]l, and that it would be too great a departure from the administrative system of the Porte to expect that the Sultan would consent to group the three Vilayets under one Gov[erno]r G[enera]l. He asked why should we not utilize the existing machinery improving and extending it, and why not retain Hilmi Pasha, under new conditions and with wider powers, but maintaining his title of Inspector Gen[era]l? He also shook his head over guaranteeing the integrity and external security of those parts of the Sultan's dominions. He seemed to think that this would be assuming a responsibility which, in certain circumstances, it might be inconvenient and indeed difficult to discharge. I pointed out to him that it would be possible to retain the three existing Valis, and designate the new Gov[erno]r G[enera]l as Vizier or with some such title; and that it was not likely that the Balkan States would venture to defy a guarantee undertaken by all the Powers. Moreover if the Turkish troops were to be reduced, it was necessary to give the Sultan some security that he could do so with safety. Our conversations on these points were necessarily cursory and academical, as he had not thought out the questions fully. . . .

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

No. 190.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Ministère Impérial des Affaires Etrangères,

23 Février (le 7 Mars) 1908.

Après avoir bien réfléchi, je suis arrivé à la conclusion que ce qu'il y a de mieux à faire en ce moment, c'est de laisser libre cours aux propositions de Sir Edward Grey.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,

ISWOLSKY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Goschen,

March 11, 1908.

I see from your letters and despatches that Baron d'Aehrenthal has made it clear that he is very angry.

But he does not make it equally clear that he has a right to be so.

His criticism of my speech⁽²⁾ would carry more weight if, either before or at the time when the speech was made, he had been actively putting forward and pressing proposals for effective reforms in Macedonia himself, instead of opposing my Gendarmerie proposal and generally showing a disposition to mark time.

Instead of being annoyed at what I said, he might more reasonably have been relieved at what I refrained from saying. I might with perfect justice have said that, during the two years I have been in Office, a most unfair share of the disagreeable work at Constantinople, in keeping the Turks up to the mark, and with regard to the Financial Commission, the Gendarmerie, and the details of Macedonian reforms, has been thrown upon our Embassy there; that owing to the supineness of the Austrian Government, and notably of their Civil Agent in Macedonia, not as much has been made of the existing reforms as might have been made; and that the difficulty of getting the Concert to agree to anything worth having is such that the Concert has become a farce and we were going to have no more to do with it.

But, instead of taking a line such as this,—which I have often been sorely tempted to do,—I continued to advocate working with the Concert and maintaining it.

It is an undisputable fact that the unfavourable impression, which has been produced on the public mind by the promotion of the Novi-Bazar railway scheme at a moment of critical suspense in Macedonian reforms, had created a new situation, at any rate in the public mind. This new situation had been constantly dwelt upon and emphasised by previous speakers in the Debate in Parliament, and it was therefore not possible for me to ignore the fact. Nor did I think it right to do so: because my experience has been that to use smooth words when things are going badly with Macedonian reforms, though it leads to agreeable compliments from other Foreign Ministers, produces no good result, but the contrary. I do not believe there was a word in my speech which was not true, and my only reference to Baron d'Aehrenthal was as favourable as I could make it: it certainly imputed no blame to him.

Instead of bickering about my speech, Baron d'Aehrenthal had much better accept some of the proposals we have put forward, or initiate some of his own which are as likely to be effective, and tell his Ambassador at Constantinople to make it clear to the Turkish Government that the Austrian Government are in earnest and to use his influence to get his Colleagues to press forward reforms. He would then be doing something to remove the unfavourable impression, to which my speech referred, but which it did not create.

Quarrelling about that speech is so useless that I do not intend to pursue the matter with Baron d'Aehrenthal. But if he refers to it again this letter will enable you to explain to him my point of view: which is that I do not at all agree with his strictures, for the reasons I have given, of which you may make use at discretion; but that I think it is more important to co-operate in Macedonian reforms than to continue a barren controversy about words.

I am grateful for the line you took in conversation on my behalf, and I cordially endorse all you said.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 1.]

⁽²⁾ [v. p. 348, *note.*]

No. 192.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

March 17, 1908.

I am glad that Iswolsky was reconciled to the communication of my proposal to the Powers. As I told you, I should have been ready, if need be, to say something in communicating my proposals to the Powers which would have prepared the way for other proposals from Iswolsky.

I am aware that my proposals go further than all the Powers are likely to go yet. The Sultan would accept them if all the Powers, especially Germany, made it clear to him that they were in earnest. But the Powers will not face the Macedonian situation, and by always attempting a minimum instead of grasping the question boldly they will be landed in trouble some day.

It ought to be clear to Iswolsky that, if the Powers will not accept the whole of our proposals, he will be able to get credit for the Russian Government by making proposals which will fall short of ours, and which the Powers will accept, having the fear of our proposals before their eyes.

The only chance I saw of making progress with Macedonian reforms was to put all our cards on the table at the best opportunity. I believe some progress will be made owing to our having done this, but there would have been no progress otherwise. For instance, I do not think that if I had not forced the pace the Russian Government would have made proposals, or if they had made some, their proposals would not have had nearly so good a chance of acceptance as they may have now.

The first idea of the Powers in dealing with Macedonian reforms is to make objections. Our proposals will give them the opportunity of doing this, and then they may perhaps accept some other proposals worth having, though not so good.

I have not yet studied the Russian proposals, and therefore cannot say what I think of them. If they are worth anything, they shall have our support.

As to Persian Railways. I am all in favour of some British railway from the south joining some Russian railway from the north. The general idea should, therefore, be encouraged.

A Committee is now meeting under the presidency of Morley, which Hardinge and I attend. We shall have worked out the question before Easter, I hope, and be in a position to make a definite proposal with regard to railway projects.

I fear the Russian railway to Kerman, proposed directly after the making of the Anglo-Russian Convention and before it has been tested by time, would alarm the Indian Government very much.

What I have in mind is a railway coming down to the Gulf, of which we should make the southern part to the Russian sphere, and which should be met by a railway brought down from Julfa by the Russians. But do not mention this yet, though you may say that we are studying the question with a view to proposing some sort of railway co-operation.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

No. 193.

*Sir Charles Hardinge to Sir Arthur Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, March 17, 1908.

We are studying Monsieur Isvolsky's counter-proposals which you sent us privately in regard to Macedonian reforms. Although they do not satisfy us entirely, I daresay after some negotiation we may be able to come to terms upon them. In any case we shall obtain something which is a good deal more than the judicial reform scheme which recently fell through. The difficulty appears to me to be to find money for the establishment of the village guards, who, unless they are fairly well paid, will undoubtedly join the various bands with their arms and equipment.

It is unfortunate that Monsieur Isvolsky will not listen to the idea of a reduction of the Turkish troops and of the guarantee of the integrity of the three Provinces. The Russian Government in this showed the cloven hoof; in the same way that they objected to Russian officers in command of gendarmerie pursuing Bulgarian or Servian bands, so also they do not like to postpone the fulfilment of Bulgarian aspirations for a fixed period of seven years. These, however, are purely personal views after a cursory glance at the memorandum, and before I have had time to study it completely. . . .⁽²⁾

Y[our]rs ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]⁽²⁾ [The remainder of this document deals with Persian railways.]

No. 194.

*Sir Charles Hardinge to Sir Arthur Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

*South Park, Penshurst, Kent,**April 13, 1908.*

. . .⁽²⁾ The Russian Embassy tell me that a visit by the King to the Emperor at Reval would be tremendously appreciated. I urged it on Grey a few days ago and he is going to speak to Asquith about it, but nothing can possibly be settled until the King returns in May.⁽³⁾ The moment seems to me propitious. There is no prospect of any attack upon the Duma and Finland will probably be quiet until the elections for the Diet in the Autumn. The visit has got to be done some time and if it does not take place at Whitsuntide at Reval it may have to take place later at St. P[etersburgh]. The visit of our King is necessary to cement the friendship, and if it can take place before anything happens to make the visit unpopular in this country it matters little to us when the visit is returned by the Emperor, who would know that he has to behave nicely from a constitutional point of view if he wants his visit to London to be a success. Grey is in favour of the idea and probably Asquith also, but they are both a little afraid of the extremists of their party and of what they might say of the King's visit to Reval. If you agree with me in this I hope you will not be alarmist to Grey about Finland or the Duma. If the visit can take place we shall in my opinion have scored our success whatever may take place later, and the general outlook in Russia for the next two months appears to be fairly quiet. Although it might upset your

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]⁽²⁾ [The opening remarks of this letter refer to personal matters.]⁽³⁾ [Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 586, says that "early in May" Sir Edward Grey obtained the consent of the King to proceed to Reval on the 8th or 9th June, v. further pp. 587 *sqq.*]

plans a little to return to Russia for the King's visit it would after all be only a question of a week which you could make up later. This visit is in my opinion the thing to work for now and it may be the key to the solution of many questions by pleasing the Emperor and the Russians and getting them to work with us in the Near and Middle East.

We are quite hopeful about Macedonian reforms. If we can only come to terms with Russia, we shall be able to secure the co-operation of France and Italy and although Austria and Germany will at first be obstructive we have reason to believe that Germany will so dislike to see a combination of four Powers in opposition to her and Austria that she will reluctantly follow us and thus force Austria to come in also. Our object in publishing the Russian mem[orandum] and our reply is to educate public opinion in Europe, and knowing that our views would be favourably received by the Russian press we also knew what effect this would have on Isvolsky. I am glad to hear from you that in this we were not mistaken. Our attitude in the Macedonian question is very much approved in this country and for that reason it would be impossible to accept Isvolsky's scheme as it stands.

Y[ou]rs ever,
CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 195.

Visit to the Emperor of Russia at Reval in June, 1908.⁽¹⁾

Secret.

After a rough passage across the North Sea the King and Queen arrived at Kiel on Sunday, the 7th June. Their Majesties were there met by Prince and Princess Henry of Prussia, and after a short stay left again for Reval escorted by a division of German destroyers for some distance from the harbour.

The smart appearance of the whole of the German North Sea Fleet lying at anchor in the port gave food for reflection upon the recent German naval programme of construction, while the intricate evolutions of the torpedo flotilla, which excited the admiration of all the naval officers on board the Royal Yacht served as a useful object lesson of the efficiency of the German navy.

I may mention that the officers of the two British cruisers H.M.S.S. "Minotaur" and "Achilles" were, while waiting at Kiel to escort the King in the Baltic, entertained at dinner by Prince Henry of Prussia, who made a speech to them expressing friendship towards England, disclaiming any aggressive intentions on the part of the German navy, and asking them to make these views understood and spread throughout England. It is thought by those who know Prince Henry that he would not have spoken in this strain without direct instructions to do so.

I was able to ascertain during our short stay at Kiel that the work of enlarging the Canal has already been begun, and that a commission is this very week sitting at Kiel to arrange the details of the work.

The King and Queen arrived at Reval on the morning of the 9th instant, having had splendid weather in the Baltic, and there met the Emperor, the two Empresses, and members of the Imperial Family, with some of the Russian

⁽¹⁾ [For the Reval interview, v. Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 586-96 and G.P. XXV, II, pp. 439-94.

The text given above is taken from a series of printed memoranda by Sir C. Hardinge describing the King's visits of 1907-8. The text has, however, been checked with the manuscript draft preserved among the Foreign Office papers for Russia 1908 (F.O. 20885/17544/08/38); except in punctuation and capitalisation it is identical with this.

Part of the report was published in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), I, pp. 210-16. It is there dated "July 12, 1908," but the original has "June."]

Ministers, on board the two Imperial yachts and the cruiser "Almaz," the sole survivor of the large Russian fleet that took part in the battle of Tsushima.

During the two days spent at Reval the weather was fortunately brilliant, although only two days earlier such a gale had been blowing as would have rendered communication between the yachts almost impossible, and 4 inches of snow had fallen.

During the course of the visit the King had several interviews with M. Stolypine and M. Isvolsky, from which, I understand, the best possible impressions were created on both sides.

I had several opportunities of discussing with M. Isvolsky the various questions of foreign policy in which our two countries are chiefly interested, and I cannot help thinking that this direct exchange of views between the two Foreign Offices will be beneficial and facilitate the solution of most of our pending questions.

My first enquiry of M. Isvolsky was as to the impression which had been created upon him and in Russia by Sir Edward Grey's recent speech in the House of Commons. He replied that it was excellent, and that what had impressed people in Russia so much was the tone of moderation and firmness with which it was inspired. He was evidently pleased with it.

The question of Macedonian reform entailed a considerable amount of discussion, and gave M. Isvolsky an opportunity of expounding the general policy of Russia towards England and Germany, which I will endeavour to describe as shortly as possible.

M. Isvolsky stated that the scheme of Macedonian reforms was one which he had deeply at heart, and upon which the Russian public opinion, as shown by the press, felt strongly. He personally would have gladly accepted the whole of the scheme as first developed by Sir Edward Grey if he had seen the slightest prospect of obtaining its adoption by the rest of the Powers, and, lastly, by the Sultan. He knew for a fact, however, that this scheme would have met with the greatest opposition on the part of Germany and Austria, and even now he anticipated considerable difficulties if any further modifications of a drastic nature were to be introduced into the scheme as defined by his last note. He reminded me that Russia is always in a difficult position *vis-à-vis* of Germany, owing to the military supremacy of the latter Power on the frontier, that in Germany there is very great nervousness as to future political developments amongst the Powers, and that the age and indifferent health of the Emperor of Austria are a source of uneasiness as to the future. It was imperative therefore that Russia should act with the greatest prudence towards Germany, and give the latter Power no cause for complaint that the improvement of the relations of Russia with England had entailed a corresponding deterioration of the relations of Russia towards Germany. During the past two months the German Government had formally complained to him more than once of the hostility of the Russian press towards Germany, and although he greatly regretted the outspoken sentiments of the Russian press, which he fully believed reflected their true feelings, he had been obliged to confess his impotence under the present system of liberty of the press to control their utterances. The visit of the French President to London, of the King to Reval, and the impending visit of the President to Russia had not tended to improve matters, and he foresaw that difficulties were to be expected from Germany and Austria, especially in the adoption of the scheme of Macedonian reforms. He therefore expressed the hope that his last note, which he had reason to believe the German Government might be induced to accept as it stands, would be adopted by Sir Edward Grey as the limit to which the rope could be strained without breaking, and that the King's visit to Reval might be consecrated by the announcement of the complete agreement of England and Russia upon the scheme of reforms to be adopted in Macedonia.

I told M. Isvolsky that when I left London the text of his last note had not been received by Sir Edward Grey, only a telegraphic summary having been sent

by Mr. O'Beirne. Sir Edward Grey had therefore been unable to give me complete and definite instructions, although he had authorised me to make suggestions for a solution of some of the points still at issue. When at Kiel I had received the text of his note, and although I realised that a complete agreement had almost been arrived at, it would be impossible to make such an announcement as he had suggested unless he was ready to accept the compromise which I had been authorised to suggest. As for the attitude of Germany towards England and Russia, and towards the recent improvement of relations between them, His Majesty's Government were inspired with no hostile feelings towards Germany, with whom they were anxious to maintain the most friendly relations, and they realised that every action should be avoided which would unnecessarily irritate or exasperate feeling in Germany. Such an attitude was probably even more necessary for Russia, but in the case of His Majesty's Government this did not mean that they would be ready to sacrifice their legitimate interests or those of humanity at large to escape the ill-will of Germany, since this would be the course best calculated to provoke it. Although the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards Germany was, and had been, absolutely correct, it was impossible to ignore the fact that, owing to the unnecessarily large increase in the German naval programme a deep distrust in England of Germany's future intentions had been created. This distrust would be still further accentuated with the progress of time, the realisation of the German programme, and the increase of taxation in England entailed by the necessary naval counter-measures. In seven or eight years' time a critical situation might arise, in which Russia, if strong in Europe, might be the arbiter of peace, and have much more influence in securing the peace of the world than at any Hague conference. For this reason it was absolutely necessary that England and Russia should maintain towards each other the same cordial and friendly relations as now exist between England and France, which in the case of England and Russia are, moreover, inspired by an identity of interests of which a solution of the Macedonian problem was not the least.

So, also, as regards the King's visit to Reval, which could not possibly be interpreted as a provocation to Germany, since it could not be admitted that the German Emperor should enjoy a monopoly of State visits to other Sovereigns, and Sir Edward Grey had been very explicit in his statement in the House of Commons that it was not proposed to negotiate any *new* treaty or convention at Reval. I explained that this statement had been expressly made with a view to preventing any trouble between Germany and Russia owing to the King's visit to the Emperor of Russia.

Proceeding to the discussion of M. Isvolsky's last note on Macedonian reforms, I pointed out to him that Sir Edward Grey did not consider that the powers of the Inspector-General to appoint the officials of the three Macedonian vilayets were sufficiently clearly defined, although his powers of dismissal were all that could be possibly desired. I therefore made to him a proposal in the following terms, which he asked me to define in writing:—

“S'il y aura des objections à la demande que les fonctionnaires dans les trois vilayets soient nommés par l'Inspecteur général, ce que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique croit pourtant être très désirable, ce dernier propose comme compromis que les fonctionnaires soient indiqués par l'Inspecteur général à la Sublime Porte, laquelle obtiendra la confirmation de leur nomination.”

I added that His Majesty's Government were ready to make any sacrifice of form provided that the substance of their demands was maintained, and in making this proposal they were anxious to meet the possible charge that might be made of an infringement of the sovereign rights of the Sultan, and at the same time to “save the Sultan's face.”

M. Isvolsky frankly admitted that the adoption of the proposal of His Majesty's Government was eminently desirable, but he begged very hard that this demand should not be pushed. He maintained that the power to nominate the officials was reserved to the Inspector-General by implication in the fourth paragraph of article 17 of the Decree of 1902, and was further strengthened by the statement in paragraph 3 of the Annex to the Russian note of the 10th/23rd April, which I understood from him had been accepted by both the German and the Austrian Governments. He urged that this point was sufficiently covered and should not now be raised, since it would provoke endless delay and discussion, and might jeopardise the rest of the scheme which had been already accepted.

I asked M. Isvolsky whether he wished me to understand that the German and Austrian Governments had so far accepted the scheme, and he distinctly told me that provided no further modifications were introduced, he would hold them to their word.

I told him that if he would write on a slip of paper that he interpreted the phrase "*pouvoir au remplacement*" in paragraph 4 of article 17 of the Decree of 1902 as meaning the confirmation by the Sultan of the appointments of officials made by the Inspector-General, we should then be in complete agreement. He replied that he hesitated to do this without previously discussing the question with his officials, but he suggested that Sir Edward Grey should, in acknowledging his note of the 3rd June, express the hope that such was the interpretation by the Russian Government of the phrase.

One of the other two points which I raised in connection with the Russian note of the 3rd June was that, while His Majesty's Government entirely agree with the views of the Russian Government as to the restriction of the activity of the foreign officers of the gendarmerie in the pursuit of the bands, they nevertheless are of opinion that the foreign officers should have the right to direct the action and disposal of the gendarmerie while co-operating with the Turkish troops for the dispersal of the bands. M. Isvolsky entirely agreed, and added that this was a point which should be settled by the Financial Commission.

I further mentioned that Sir Edward Grey presumed that the system of "*douzièmes provisoires*" mentioned in the fourth paragraph of the note of the 3rd June would be applied to the new budget submitted for the approval of the Porte and not to the former budget.

M. Isvolsky replied that he had so understood it, but that he would make further enquiry upon this point. He suggested that Sir Edward Grey should in the reply to his note of the 3rd June also make a statement of his interpretation in this sense.

I told M. Isvolsky that although, owing to your not having received his note in time, I was not authorised by you to say so, I believed that you would regard the contents of his last note as satisfactory with the exception of the points which we had already discussed, and I asked him what he considered should be the next step to take in approaching the Powers about the formation of a mobile force of troops in Macedonia.

He said that, as the suggestion was that of Sir Edward Grey, the proposal should in his opinion be made by him. I remarked that in that case we should count on his full support.

Considerable time was devoted to the discussion of Persian affairs.

M. Isvolsky said that he was much preoccupied with the condition of affairs on the Russo-Persian frontier, that the delay granted for the required satisfaction to be given by Persia was about to expire, and that it might be necessary to exact compensation from the tribes. I replied that it was not a matter in which we wished to interfere, that since the conclusion of our Convention we had confidence in Russia's intentions towards Persia, but that we earnestly hoped that a satisfactory and amicable solution of the difficulty could be found.

Turning to Persia generally, M. Isvolsky expressed his concern for the general

situation of that country and his anxieties as to the intrigues of Germany. He strongly advocated a joint loan to Persia as the only means of restoring order and of maintaining the Shah and the present Government.

I observed that to give the present Persian Government a large loan would be a simple waste of money; that in a very short time it would be spent like all previous loans without any productive results, and it would simply increase the indebtedness of Persia. According to the information received from Mr. Marling, the French Financial Adviser was of opinion that only a small sum such as 400,000*l.* or 500,000*l.* would be necessary at present, but that he had so far not formed a definite opinion nor had the Assembly asked for a loan. If, however, a small loan should become necessary His Majesty's Government would not be willing to contribute to it except in return for other advantages such as concessions for railway construction in Persia.

M. Isvolsky stated that he had not received information of M. Bizot's opinion as mentioned above, and that his impression was that a large loan would be necessary in the immediate future. He did not know whether for a small loan it would be either possible or politic to demand advantages such as I had suggested, since it would open the field to German concessions in return for small advances of money. This, it should be the object of England and Russia to prevent. If, however, the Persian Government required a small advance it would be always possible to give the money still lying at the bank in Tehran which had been provided for possible contingencies on the Shah's accession. I told him that the contribution paid into the Bank of Persia by His Majesty's Government had been now withdrawn, but I did not remind him that a considerable inroad had been made into the Russian share for the payment of the Cossack Brigade, &c.

M. Isvolsky then remarked that the railway convention would expire within the next two years and that it was very necessary that the British and Russian Governments should have a definite policy of railway construction in Persia. He reminded me that he had been waiting some time for the views of His Majesty's Government. I asked him what were the views of the Russian Government, and he replied that there were in his opinion only three possible through-routes from Russia to India, from Julfa through Tehran and Kerman to Nushki, from Askabad through Meshed to Seistan, and from Tashkend through Afghanistan to Peshawar.

I told M. Isvolsky in the plainest possible manner that all of these three lines were for the moment quite out of the question, that the idea of the junction of the Indian and Russian railway systems was at present premature although undoubtedly it would be made some day in the more or less remote future. I told him that His Majesty's Government would however approve of a line passing through Persia to the Persian Gulf at Mohammerah, from which place a British road concession as far as the Russian zone at Khorembad already exists. I pointed out that the advantages of this route from a Russian point of view, and, in view of his timidity of Germany, touched only lightly on the effect that the construction of this road would have on the Bagdad Railway.

M. Isvolsky studied the proposed route on the map with evident interest, and remarked that, although this route would have the undoubted advantage of neutralising the Bagdad Railway, he feared that it would be economically disadvantageous to Russia as it would facilitate the competition of foreign seaborne trade with that of Russian goods brought by rail. This, I observed, would be the same with all railways wherever they might lead to. He said that the matter was one which would require careful study, and that he would inform Sir Edward Grey later of his views.

He pointed out to me a fact of which I was unaware, and that is, that there is a short link between the Russian railway systems north and south of the Caucasus still wanting, and that this would have to be completed in order to obtain through traffic. I gather that the natural obstacles in this short link are considerable.

M. Isvolsky then asked me whether complete order had been restored on the Afghan border, and whether there was any possibility of a renewal of military

operations. I told him that, as far as I knew, the military operations had been completely successful, and that there was no question of any further military measures. I pointed out to him that during the recent border troubles the advantages of the Anglo-Russian Convention had been put to the test, and that had it not been for this Convention, it might have been very difficult to prevent a punitive expedition being despatched into Afghanistan. There had also been no rumours, as was usual formerly in similar circumstances, of encouragement by Russian emissaries and intrigues with the tribes. These were the best proofs of a real improvement in Anglo-Russian relations, which there was every reason to hope would be fruitful of the best results, and the loyalty of the Russian Government in observing that part of the agreement relating to Afghanistan which had so far not been confirmed had been much appreciated by His Majesty's Government. I informed M. Isvolsky that His Majesty's Government had recently instructed the Viceroy of India to press the Ameer for a reply to the communication made to him some time ago, and that they hoped before long to have a favourable reply. The fact was that the Ameer, though friendly disposed, was not as powerful as his father, and the opposition of his brother, Nasrallah Khan, had to be reckoned with.

M. Isvolsky thanked me for what I had said, and expressed the hope that the Ameer's assent might not be much longer delayed. He admitted that the troubles on the Anglo-Indian frontier had caused him some anxiety, since, had they led to an expedition to Cabul, the whole Afghan question might have been reopened and the successful efforts made to settle this question by last year's agreement rendered valueless.

I mentioned to M. Isvolsky that we had recently had to remind the Consul-General at Crete that it would be necessary to take certain measures, on the withdrawal of the international troops, to maintain the Turkish flag on Suda Island, the only remaining emblem of Turkish suzerainty over the island. He said that he had heard of our proposal to leave a small contingent, and he thought that it presented many inconveniences. It was the first time that he had heard of this idea, although he understood that we had made a communication in this sense to the High Commissioner.

I replied that it was perfectly true that M. Zaimis had been notified of our intention, but that the idea was not at all a new one and had been contained in a communication which His Majesty's Government had made to all the Powers interested in May or June 1906. The French Government had since made a counter-proposal that a stationnaire should be sent there by each Power in turn to protect the Turkish flag, and Sir Edward Grey was, I believe, ready to accept this suggestion.

M. Isvolsky said that he had not heard of this counter-proposal, which would in any case require to be carefully studied.

In raising the question of the Balkan railways he complained bitterly of Baron Aehrenthal's action in springing upon him the Sanjak Railway concession without any warning whatever, a proceeding which had seriously disturbed the *status quo* in the Balkans, and had shaken his confidence in him. It was clear that in spite of Baron Aehrenthal having spent seventeen years in Russia, he had not grasped the real feeling in Russia towards the Slav population in the Balkans, since he had imagined that there could be only a short flare up in the Russian press, and that Austro-Russian relations would then return once more to their former groove. In this he was entirely mistaken, since the relations between Austria and Russia in connection with affairs in the Balkans could not be the same again. M. Isvolsky said that he felt considerable anxiety about the Balkan railway questions; he was convinced that the Sanjak Railway would be pushed by Austria with the utmost energy, and he considered it absolutely necessary that the Danube-Adriatic railway should be pushed forward *pari passu*. The Russian Government had only a very small financial interest in the proposed railway, but they realised that the completion of the Austrian schemes would mean the Germanisation of Macedonia. He had heard rumours of Austria having obtained a monopoly of railway construction in Macedonia, and if this rumour should be

confirmed he would not hesitate to take strong measures to prevent what he would consider to be an infringement of the spirit of the Treaty of Berlin. Although he regretted that His Majesty's Government had been unable so far to support the Serbian railway scheme he appreciated their reasons for not doing so, but he hoped that, as soon as an agreement had been arrived at on the scheme of Macedonian reforms, His Majesty's Government would be able to lend their support to it.

I told M. Isvolsky that His Majesty's Government are not at all opposed in principle to the construction of railways in Macedonia, which must necessarily have a civilising influence, but that they had deprecated the opportuneness of the action of Austria at a moment when the Powers were devoting their whole attention to the question of reforms. I was, however, able to state that, as soon as the scheme of reforms had been put forward by the Powers at Constantinople, Sir Edward Grey would be ready to instruct His Majesty's Ambassador to impress upon the Porte the necessity for granting similar treatment to the Danube-Adriatic Railway as has already been granted to the Sanjak Railway. We were, I said, of the opinion that either no concession, or both concessions, should be granted.

M. Isvolsky entirely concurred, adding that the Russian Government would prefer that none should be granted.

The conversations which I had with M. Isvolsky, of which the above is a summary, lasted about three hours altogether, and although I have known M. Isvolsky personally for a great many years, they gave me an interesting insight into the official side of his character which I had not previously had an opportunity of seeing. He struck me as very able and adroit, but extremely timid. Although he tried hard to make me commit myself on the Macedonian question beyond the limit of the authority which was given to me, any suggestion which I made to him was at once set aside as requiring careful study. He was, however, very friendly throughout.

I had several opportunities of short conversations with the Emperor, who looked extraordinary well and in the best possible spirits. On the first occasion that His Majesty spoke to me he warmly praised Sir Edward Grey's speech in the House of Commons which, he said, showed a remarkably true appreciation of the real political situation in Russia, and which had made the best possible impression. He asked me to convey to Sir Edward Grey his warmest thanks, and to say that he endorsed and accepted every word that his speech contained. He was extremely glad that the debate had taken place, since it had shown to the world that the two great political parties in England shared the same friendly feeling towards Russia, and the dissentients having had free scope to say all that they wanted against him and his Government, the air had been cleared as after a thunderstorm.

He hoped very much to have the opportunity before long of making the personal acquaintance of Sir Edward Grey, who had so largely contributed to the realisation of his dearest hopes in achieving a real improvement in the relations between England and Russia.

The Emperor repeatedly expressed his great satisfaction at the visit of the King and Queen which, he said, sealed and confirmed the intention and spirit of the Anglo-Russian Agreement, and he expressed his profound conviction that the friendly sentiments which now prevail between the two Governments could only mature and grow stronger with the progress of time to the mutual advantage of both countries. There might be occasional divergence of views in small matters, but the identity of the national interests of England and Russia in Europe and Asia would far outweigh any possible results from such trivial differences of opinion. A glance at the Russian press of all shades and opinions showed conclusively how extremely popular throughout Russia the King's visit had become, and how it was welcomed as the visible sign of a new era in Anglo-Russian relations. On my expressing my surprise that such papers as the "*Novoe Vremja*," which I had always regarded when in Russia as the bitterest foe of England, had now become the ardent supporters of an Anglo-Russian understanding, His Majesty admitted that he also was astonished at the rapidity with which the feeling had spread, and that he had never been so surprised as when he had read

recently in a Chauvinistic "rag" called the "Sviet" a warm article in praise of England, and urging closer relations between the two countries. Since the liberty of the press had been established in Russia, the press had really become the reflex of public opinion, and it was astonishing to see the complete unanimity that prevails as to the necessity of warm and friendly relations with England. The idea had taken firm root amongst the people, and it only required now to be carefully fostered to bear fruit in the future. The Emperor admitted that from the point of view of the relations of Russia to Germany, the liberty of expression now enjoyed by the press had caused him and his Government considerable embarrassment, since every incident that occurred in any distant province of the Empire, such as an earthquake or thunderstorm, was at once put down to Germany's account, and serious complaints had recently been made to him and the Government of the unfriendly tone of the Russian press. He was, however, quite unable to remedy this state of affairs, except by an occasional official communiqué to the press, and this had generally but slight effect. He wished very much that the press would turn their attention to internal rather than to foreign affairs, but this was too much to expect.

The Emperor alluded to the recent Baltic and North Sea Agreements, and said that he could not see at all the reason for them nor the advantage. As far as he could judge, the situation remains practically the same as heretofore, the only result being much waste of time and energy, and considerable anxiety during the negotiations amongst smaller Powers as to the intentions of the Great Powers. They seemed, however, to have given some satisfaction to the German Emperor, and he did not therefore grudge it to him.

I seized the opportunity to say to the Emperor that I presumed that it would always remain a cardinal principle of Russian policy to keep the Straits between the Baltic and North Sea open, to which His Majesty warmly assented as a matter of vital interest to Russia. I said that the free entry into the Baltic was also a matter of great importance to England, and that if ever the question of closing the Straits were raised in the future, Russia could count on our co-operation with her to keep the Straits open. The Emperor remarked that this is one more instance of the identity of our interests.

I should mention that M. Isvolsky also spoke to me about the North Sea Agreement, and remarked that he could not understand the definition of its scope, implying that it did not cover the Straits. I replied that the statement that for the purposes of the declaration in question, the North Sea should be regarded as stretching eastward as far as its junction with the water of the Baltic could hardly be more explicit as covering the Straits, since without some special definition it could hardly be maintained that the Straits are comprised in the Baltic. At the same time I added that it seemed to me a pity that similar wording in an inverse sense had not to be adopted in the Baltic Agreement so that the Straits might have been covered by both Agreements. M. Isvolsky expressed his doubts as to the advantages to have been obtained, and added that he knew that the German Government interpret the North Sea Agreement in a different sense to our interpretation. He did not tell me, in reply to my enquiry, what that sense was.

I reminded M. Isvolsky of his conversation with Sir Arthur Nicolson about the Straits, and asked him to what Treaties he had referred as governing the Straits. He replied that he had meant the Treaty of 1857 for the redemption of the Sound Dues, and that he knew of no other Treaty touching this question.

I had but few opportunities of conversation with M. Stolypine, the Prime Minister, but he expressed himself in very friendly terms towards England, and warmly advocated a policy of *rapprochement* with our country. He gave me the impression of a very straightforward, strong, and courageous man. I was informed on the very best authority that when invited by the Emperor to accompany His Majesty to Reval he told the Emperor it must be distinctly understood that he went to meet a Constitutional Sovereign as the first Minister in a Government based on constitutional principles, to which His Majesty at once assented.

It is not for me to touch upon the private aspect of the effect of the King's visit upon the Emperor, and the manifest pleasure shown by the Emperor and the Empress at meeting again after so long an interval of trial and misfortune to some of their relations to whom they are most attached, but some of the members of the Emperor's suite commented upon the marked difference in the Emperor's spirits and attitude during the King's visit to Reval compared to what they were at the Emperor's recent visit to Swinemünde, where he felt anxiety all the time as to what might be unexpectedly sprung upon him.

On the second day of the visit, when the King was on board the Imperial yacht "Standart," His Majesty appointed the Emperor an Admiral of the Fleet in the British Navy. The Emperor was immensely pleased at the unexpected honour bestowed upon him by the King, and, at the official banquet on board the royal yacht in the evening, the King proposed the Emperor's health as a British Admiral of the Fleet, and the British cruisers saluted the Emperor.

It was a touching incident to all those who remember the arrogance and self-confidence of the large Russian Fleet which set sail for Japan in 1904, and of which the sole surviving ship lay at anchor at Reval alongside the Emperor's yacht, when the Emperor, rising to reply to the King's toast, with great modesty and apparent diffidence, paid the King a counter compliment by asking His Majesty to do him the honour of becoming an admiral "of our young and growing fleet," and as the King warmly accepted the honour, the guns of the Emperor's yacht saluted the new Russian Admiral of the Fleet.

It was a fitting ending to a satisfactory visit, which should be productive of the best possible results in the future.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

June 12, 1908.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The Editors think the following Russian account of the Reval interview may be here given.

M. Isvolski, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to Count Benckendorff, Russian Ambassador at London. Letter, June 5-18, 1908.

(¹) During the meeting of our Emperor with King Edward at Reval, I was received by His Majesty and had a number of lengthy conversations with Sir Charles Hardinge, the English Under-secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. I consider it my duty to acquaint you, confidentially, for your own personal information, with certain details of this exchange of opinions.

The general impression which this meeting has left, was an extremely favourable one from a political point of view. King Edward openly expressed his satisfaction and sees in this meeting a confirmation and strengthening of the agreement reached between Russia and England, as well as a pledge for the further solidarity of both Governments. His Majesty emphasized with particular satisfaction the hopeful turn of affairs in our domestic politics and the approval which the activity of Secretary of State Stolypin has met with in serious English circles.

Summarizing Hardinge's various declarations, I must, above all things, emphasize, that no attempt was made on his side to depart from the standpoint of concrete agreements, the existing as well as the prospective ones, nor to draw us into general political combinations. Sir Charles confirmed the fact that the London Cabinet is entirely of our opinion that the *entrevue* at Reval need occasion no anxiety to the other States; as to what may especially concern Germany, the British Government sincerely desires to maintain the very best relations with her and does not believe that these relations will be strained for any reason in the immediate future.

"In spite of this," Sir Charles Hardinge remarked to me, "one cannot close one's eyes to the fact, that, if Germany should continue to increase her naval armaments at the same accelerated pace, a most alarming and strained situation might arise in Europe in 7 or 8 years.*

(¹) [Siebert (1921), pp. 478-80. Unless otherwise stated, notes, punctuation, italics, etc., here following are as in original. Thus the starred note immediately below is by the American Editor of Siebert, as is that marked †, p. 246.]

*The plans of the Russian General Staff provided for the outbreak of a war with Germany for the years 1915-6. The war started in 1914.

Then, without doubt, Russia would be the arbiter of the situation; it is for this reason that we, in the interest of peace and the preservation of the balance of power, desire that Russia be as strong as possible on land and on sea."

Sir Charles reiterated this idea more than once, whereby he apparently wished to have it understood that he is expressing not his own personal opinion but the decided political conviction of the London Cabinet.

Proceeding to the separate questions of interest to Russia and to England, Sir Charles spoke warmly of the hopeful results of the Agreement signed last year,† thanks to which not a single one of the questions which had recently arisen between Russia and England, had taken a dangerous or acute character. According to him, it is only due to the Convention, and the absolute sincerity with which Russia fulfilled her obligations, that the incident on the Afghan Frontier did not result in the advance of the Indian troops into Afghanistan; the London Cabinet appreciates our attitude all the more since, regarded from the purely formal side of things, the Convention regarding Afghanistan, which has so far not been recognized by the Emir [Amcer], has not yet come into force (2)

† Providing for the division of Persia into British and Russian "zones of influence."

(2) [The document quoted by Siebert breaks off here.]

[ED. NOTE.—For King Edward's visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl on August 12, 1908, v. *infra*, pp. 827–30, App. IV.]

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE YOUNG TURKISH REVOLUTION.

I. THE REVOLUTION OF 1908.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The Young Turkish Revolution is described in much detail in *A. & P.* (1909), CV, (*id.* 4529), pp. 943–1082. But, in so much as the first reports of the movement were not always correct and perspective was not always preserved, it seems best to print two private letters exhibiting the situation just before its outbreak, and some extracts from the Annual Report for Turkey for 1908, together with a few other papers.]

No. 196.

Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice to Mr. Tyrrell.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Tyrrell,

Con[stantino]ple, April 12, 1908.

. . . .⁽²⁾ During the last few years our policy, if I may so call it, in Turkey has been, and for some time to come will be, to attempt the impossible task of furthering our commercial interests while pursuing a course (in Macedonia, Armenia, Turco-Persian Boundary &c.) which the Sultan interprets as being pre-eminently hostile in aim and tendency. These two lines are diametrically opposed and consequently incompatible with one another. In a highly centralized theocracy like the Sultanate and Caliphate combined, with its pre-economic conceptions, every big trade &c. concession is regarded as an Imperial favour to be bestowed on the seemingly friendly, a category in which, needless to say, we are not included.

. . . .⁽³⁾ Political considerations arising out of our action at Berlin in 1878 have, rather naturally, resulted in a certain body of public opinion in England feeling morally bound to champion reforms in Macedonia which the Turks are convinced must lead up to the violent separation of those provinces from the Ottoman Empire—a “process of consolidation” of their Empire, as Beaconsfield once styled it. The Turks are almost certainly right in their forecasts. They conquered those provinces by spilling Moslem blood and they won’t relinquish them without a desperate and sanguinary struggle, while it seems as if that struggle is bound to come within a measurable distance of time. One feels that the British Gov[ernmen]t whether Liberal or Conservative must needs continue on its present course in Macedonia so that until that embroglio works itself out any British Ambassador here must necessarily find himself in the equivocal, if not impossible position of having to goad the Sultan with the pinpricks of reform proposals while being expected to score in the commercial line successes which are dependent on the Sultan’s goodwill. Under such conditions Sir W. White used to say that the Amb[assador] here can only strive manfully to keep the boat of British prestige and interests from slipping down stream while any Ambassador who, spurred by ambition, attempts to play a special rôle and to achieve great results is doomed to failure and disappointment. Thus, until the Macedonian tangle is unravelled, the situation here would seem to demand a man who is not in a hurry to make a reputation, who is serious, level-headed, and sympathetic and who is consequently likely to impress the Sultan and inspire him with personal confidence. Such a man will ensure our at least holding our own in matters commercial and, possessing the confidence of the Turks in his judgment, goodwill and intentions, will be able to mitigate the untoward events certain to accompany the Macedonian *dénouement*, while, should the Sultan die within a few years and a change of régime with its attendant troubles supervene a man of sound common sense will be a safe and invaluable guide. The next few years may see clouded times fraught with big

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

⁽²⁾ [The opening sentences of this letter are of a purely personal nature.]

⁽³⁾ [The omitted passage refers to Turkish commerce.]

events which one would not like to see spell disaster to British interests and prestige, and a safe man, possessed of judgment and tact, knowing the value of "festina lente" would seem preferable to a "strong" man or a genius. . . .⁽¹⁾

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

G. H. FITZMAURICE.

⁽¹⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to unimportant matters.]

No. 197.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. G. H. Barclay.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Barclay,

May 26, 1908.

It may be worth telling you that when Abdul Hamid Bey, recently Turkish Chargé d'Affaires in London, came to take leave I took the opportunity of speaking to him frankly and unofficially.

I told him that we had no bad disposition whatever towards Turkey, but that the Porte did not give us a chance of improving our relations with them. I had made an effort last year, in a speech to the Balkan Committee, to give the Turks credit for what improvement had taken place in the civil administration of Macedonia, and to point out that if only the Turks would put a stop to the outrages by the bands there would be a real improvement in the general condition of Macedonia.

Had the Turks taken advantage of this, I should have been the first to use the occasion to point out that things had improved. But, instead, the outrages had been allowed to increase, and in the intervening months since I had spoken they had become worse than ever.

This made us perfectly helpless in the matter.

As long as Turkey was incapable of decent government we could do nothing to help her, and I impressed upon Hamid that we had no political motive in pressing this question of reforms.

Hamid said he thought we had not a bad opinion of Hilmi as Inspector-General of Macedonia, and I told him this was the case; but the situation could not improve as long as Hilmi, or any one else in Hilmi's position, was paralysed by orders from the Palace. If Hilmi were given orders and a free hand to use some selected troops and the Gendarmerie, things might get better, but not otherwise.

I took the opportunity of speaking to Hamid in this sense because he told me he was going back to Constantinople, and as he was no longer in an official position here I could tell him what I thought without making him think it obligatory on himself to enter upon an elaborate argument in defence of Turkish administration: which the Turkish Ambassador always feels bound to do.

[Yours sincerely,

E GREY].

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

Extract from Annual Report for Turkey for the Year 1908.⁽¹⁾

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir G. Lowther, No. 105 of February 17, 1909, R. February 22, 1909.)

Representation of Great Britain and Turkey in Constantinople and London.

Sir Nicholas O'Connor died on the 19th March, after an illness of three weeks; his funeral, which took place, at his express desire, at the British Cemetery

⁽¹⁾ [Selections from this Report are here given to describe the Young Turkish Revolution in its cause and general effects. A few illustrative documents have been added in notes, which were not published in A. & P. (1909), CV, (Cd. 4529). A Memorandum on the Young Turkish Revolution (9422), written by Mr. (Sir) J. A. C. Tilley, March 1, 1909, is not printed here as the ground is more fully covered in the Annual Report.]

at Scutari, was made the occasion by the Sultan of showing his respect for the memory of an Ambassador, with whom, during eight years, he had always maintained the most friendly personal relations, in spite of constant political difficulties.

A matter which at one time appeared likely to cause considerable difficulty was the appointment of a successor to Musurus Pasha, as Ambassador in London. The name of Reshid Bey, at the time Ottoman Ambassador in Rome was put forward privately, and Sir Nicholas O'Connor advised his rejection on the ground that he had not sufficient influence or strength of character, and also because it was suggested that it was desired to remove him from Rome in order to make room there for Selim Pasha. Possibly with the view that any complication would help to delay the presentation of the note for judicial reforms the Sultan clung to his candidate, declaring that he had special confidence in Reshid, and demanding to know the reasons for which he was not acceptable. Various candidates were suggested, and finally Rifaat Bey, Ottoman Minister at Athens, was appointed.

I arrived here as His Majesty's Ambassador on the 30th July.

The Constitutional Movement.

For some years past, in and out of Turkey, it was generally known that a revolutionary movement set on foot by Young Turks was proceeding, but it was also generally thought that, thanks to the very complete system of espionage established by the Sultan, the development of the idea was surrounded by almost insuperable difficulties. Everyone's action in Turkey was watched, every tongue was gagged. The leader of the movement, Murad Bey (at one time its most active member) was cajoled back to Yildiz, and this seemed to be a check to it, for Paris was the headquarters of the movement. Exiles for the cause there were in different parts of the Empire and in different parts of Europe, and under these circumstances it seemed that the movement could not have much cohesion.

Turks high and low suffered, some because there was evidence that they were associated with the movement, others unjustly, for the mere expression of an opinion in favour of a somewhat more extensive form of liberty than the slavery under which they were living, but all suffered, and few were able to escape even from their own country, so complete was the system of espionage. But the spies did their work ill. The Paris Committee had found it necessary to form a branch in Turkey, called at first the Committee of Liberty, and then the Ottoman Committee of Union and Progress. These agents worked silently, but unselfishly and surely, on the lines of Freemasonry in the Salonica district, and especially in the army corps there and at Adrianople. They were wise enough to understand that unless they had the army with them, any movement would be doomed to failure. They all, in the early stages of the movement, not only gave their services free, but also ran great risks for their lives. To this day it is not known with any certainty when it was timed that the revolution should take place. Certainly not at the moment it did; it is generally believed that it was intended as a birthday present for the Sultan on the 27th September. What then was the cause of the outbreak? What set the match to the mine? The answer is to be found in Reval. Financial control and the Gendarmerie in Macedonia had deeply wounded the pride of the Young Türks, who still had ideas of the integrity of the Empire. The news that was wafted down from the meeting at Reval led these enthusiasts to believe that if the Anglo-Russian plan were to be put into effect, they might say good-bye to Macedonia, and probably ere long to the whole of Turkey in Europe. They knew that resistance on the part of their Sultan was not to be looked for, and that if this tutelage were carried out it would amount to an acceptance by Europe of the principle that Turkey was unable to manage her own affairs. It was a justifiable and a commendable feeling.

The seizure of the military chest and a number of rifles at Resna, and the murder of General Shemsi Pasha, who was sent to punish the offenders, and a similar incident at Presba were the first notes of alarm in the movement. These

were followed by an attempt on the life of Saedek Pasha, one of the Sultan's Aides-de-Camp, and as early as the first days of July an officer who called on our Consul at Monastir announced that a revolution was to take place in a few days, which did not mean hostility towards Christians, and he wanted to know what the attitude of Great Britain would be.

Arrears of pay and unfair promotion had caused much discontent in the Adrianople garrison. On the 17th July Mr. Barclay reported that the majority of the officers of the IIIrd Army Corps were in favour of the Young Turk movement, and intended to revive the Constitution of 1876.

A large gathering of Albanians at Perisovitch supplied further evidence that something serious was in the air.

Ismail Mahir Pasha, who has recently been murdered, was sent to Salonica to report on the progress of the Young Turkish movement, and reported unfavourably on Hilmi Pasha, the Inspector-General; but at the instigation of the Grand Vizier he was banished.

Niazi and Enver Bey, who appear to have been the most active members of the movement, were being generally spoken of, and several officers of the IIIrd Army Corps actually addressed telegrams to the Sultan demanding a Constitution, and the two officers in question issued revolutionary manifestos in the name of the Committee of Union and Progress.

The Palace spies, when they realized how far matters had gone, concealed nothing from His Majesty, who immediately took the usual steps under such circumstances. His Majesty called to Constantinople Enver Bey, with all sorts of promises of reward and advancement, but the summons was ignored. Further alarming news reached His Majesty. Hurried Councils of Ministers took place. His Majesty dismissed his Grand Vizier, and in despair sent for Saïd Pasha and Kiamil Pasha, who, both of them, in their day had suffered for their English sympathies, in order to check the flow of revolution which the Sultan saw advancing on him with alarming rapidity. The IIIrd Army Corps at Salonica and Monastir were in open revolt, and troops ordered from the Smyrna district were ominously slow in moving. It was clear that the revolt had taken a firm root in the country. To the telegram from Serres demanding the Constitution in the name of the army, the Sultan, faithful to his habits, sent a procrastinating reply, but the Committee under whose authority the telegram had been sent were not to be put off, and a reply was addressed by them couched in terms that gave food for serious thought at Yildiz.

At Monastir, on the 23rd July, the Constitution of 1876 was publicly proclaimed in the presence of the Vali and other officials, without any disorder. At Drama a similar proclamation was made, and at Salonica officers and civilians assured the public that the Constitution would be proclaimed at once. The Officer Commanding the Troops at Uskub having declined to support the movement was conveyed to the station.

A Council of Ministers was called on the 23rd July. There were but two alternatives—to surrender to the demand, or to fight the rebels. It must have indeed appeared incomprehensible to His Majesty that, with the immense army he had always maintained, a handful of rebels could not be suppressed. But the Ministers realized that things had gone too far to turn back, and on the suggestion of Saïd Pasha they declared that their advice to the Sultan must be to grant the Constitution. The decision was communicated to His Majesty. The scene that followed and the circumstances under which His Majesty decided to agree to it will perhaps never become public property. Nor is it possible to say whether His Majesty, in granting the Constitution, hoped that circumstances might play into his hands and enable him to withdraw it again, or whether the report that the IIInd and IIIrd Army Corps would immediately march on Yildiz if he did not agree, exercised an influence over His Majesty.

All we know is that Saïd Pasha left the room with instructions to take the necessary measures and to declare that His Majesty had consented to renew the ill-fated Constitution of 1876, and on the 24th July an Imperial Iradé was sent to the Governors of provinces instructing them to hold the necessary elections for the Chamber of Deputies, in accordance with the Constitution of 1876. Liberty of the press was immediately granted, and in the early days articles of praise were showered on the Sultan for his wisdom and graciousness in declaring the Constitution. The spies, who had permeated every corner, disappeared as the snow before the sun, and the enthusiasm of the people, of all races and creeds, knew no bounds. Determination of all to combine in working for the good of the Empire and loyalty to the Sultan formed the key-note of the early days of the revolution. A general amnesty was declared for all political exiles and refugees. As a result of the sinking of all differences at that moment, it may be recorded that, on the suggestion of the Mutessarif, the President of the Bulgarian Committee and the Greek Archbishop at Serres met in a fraternal embrace.

His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires was immediately instructed to offer to the Grand Vizier the congratulations of His Majesty's Government, and he told his Highness that the promulgation of the Constitution had called forth the warmest sympathy in England. His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires was instructed to add that such action as His Majesty's Government had from time to time taken with regard to the state of affairs in Armenia and Macedonia, had been inspired solely with a view to obtaining an amelioration in the government of those districts affected by our Treaty obligations, but had never been marked by any hostility towards Turkey. An assurance was given that His Majesty's Government desired to do nothing to embarrass the Turkish Government in those difficult moments.

Some fear was felt by the leaders of the movement that the people of Constantinople might get out of hand in their demonstrations which, in the early days, were numerous and enthusiastic, and a proclamation was issued enjoining on the population to do nothing to harm foreigners, Turks, or their property. Indirect appeals were made to the Embassy as to whether asylum would be granted to those members of the old régime who were in danger of their lives; but these were not encouraged. Petitions were made to the Palace to remove members of the Camarilla, and especially Izzet Pasha, but the Sultan refused. Gradual dismissal of obnoxious Ministers and of Court functionaries however took place.

The Sultan took the oath on the Koran, as Caliph, not to repeal the Constitution, and the Sheik-ul-Islam officially notified and registered the oath.

On my arrival on the 30th July, I found considerable excitement prevailing, and at the very outset was approached with a view to advising the Grand Vizier to influence the Sultan to dismiss all the Camarilla, a request with which I did not comply.

Selim Pasha, one of the most suspected, and previously Minister of Mines and Forests, escaped with the assistance of the Italian Embassy.

Izzet Pasha, the Sultan's Second Secretary, a man known to have illicitly acquired great wealth, and to have been guilty of great cruelty, also escaped on board a British vessel. Attempts were made to stop the vessel at the Dardanelles, but although demands to this effect could not be complied with, no resentment was felt towards Great Britain.⁽²⁾

Englishmen were the recipients of many expressions of friendliness from Turks, who felt that the new movement could rely upon our moral support. There was a

(2) [The fate of the various fallen Ministers is given in a despatch No. 462, Sir G. Lowther to Sir E. Grey, D. August 11, 1908, R. August 17, 1908, published in *A. & P.* (1909), CV, (Cd. 4529), pp. 1004-1005. From this the following sentences were omitted: "The infamous Mehemet Cherkio, to whom used to be committed the task of putting an end to those who were obnoxious to the Palace, fled to Moudania on his way to Broussa, and was there seized by the people, and tied up and dragged about like a bear. He begged to be killed, but was told that no-one would demean himself by shedding such ignoble blood."]

general feeling that the new reform had a better chance of success than all the reforms granted by Abdul Hamid in the past. It had not been brought about by direct foreign pressure upon the Sultan, nor was it the work of a few statesmen ahead of their time like the promulgation of the Constitution of 1876. It had been obtained by the joint pressure of the army and His Majesty's Mussulman subjects, and the almost immediate cessation of band activity gave hopes that the reform would benefit Moslems and Christians alike.

On the 31st July at the Solanlik in the presence of all the foreign Representatives the Sultan declared his firm resolve to uphold the Constitution, and a favourable impression was generally made by the freedom allowed to the people in the neighbourhood of the Palace to approach within the immediate proximity of the Sultan.

A suspicion, however, existed in some portions of the army that the League intended violent measures against the Sultan, and a deputation of 300 officers and men came from Adrianople to assure His Majesty of their loyalty.

On the 1st August the Hattı Humayun was read. It at first met with a most favourable reception, but considerable discontent and dissatisfaction were caused by the discovery that Article 10 empowered His Majesty to nominate of his own initiative the Grand Vizier, the Sheikh-ul-Islam and the Ministers of War and Marine. Said Pasha by yielding to the Palace the control of the two Departments, where corruption had been chiefly rife, brought about his own downfall, and the appointments were finally left in the hands of the Grand Vizier.⁽³⁾

(³) [The following despatch from Sir G. Lowther encloses an account from Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice of his interview on the 7th with Said Pasha, who had resigned from the office of Grand Vizier two days earlier.

No. 198. Ed. Add.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 28455/23627/08/44.

(No. 459.) Confidential.

Sir,

Therapia, D. August 10, 1908.

R. August 17, 1908.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a Memorandum by Mr. Fitzmaurice giving an account of an interview he had on the 7th instant with the late Grand Vizier, Said Pasha, at the request of the latter. His Highness gave an account of the circumstances attending the re-establishment of the Constitution, stating that at one moment the Sultan had meditated an attempt to avert it by means of foreign complications. He repudiated the charges made against him by the League of having endeavoured to check the reform and requested the protection of His Majesty's Embassy should any steps be taken against him.

You will perceive that Mr. Fitzmaurice subsequently saw some of the chiefs of the League and received their assurances that there was no intention of molesting Said Pasha.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 198.

Memorandum.

At the urgent request of Küchük Said Pasha, ex-Grand Vizier, I visited His Highness this morning at his house. He stated that he was rather perturbed at the tone of some articles in the papers which drew their inspiration from the League of Progress and Union. These articles, he said, styled him a traitor to his country, urged that he should be made to stand his trial and explain his "anti-constitutional" attitude during the period of some fourteen days that he had just held the post of Grand Vizier and demanded that his papers should be seized and examined, especially those referring to his having taken refuge in His Majesty's Embassy during the late Lord Currie's time. His Highness said that in view of the tone of these articles and the apparently illegal arrests accompanied by insulting treatment of ex-Ministers &c. which were taking place daily he could not but feel apprehensive, and, while not making any special request for the protection of His Majesty's Government, begged that we should bring the matter to the notice of the proper Authorities. He declared that he had nothing to conceal, that his conscience did not reproach him with any act he had committed during the fifty years he had been connected with the service of his country, that his official acts during the seven periods that he had been Grand Vizier were recorded in the archives of the Porte, but that the people or Government had no right to his private papers. The League of Progress and Union reproached him with

On the occasion of my presenting my letters to the Sultan, His Majesty twice assured me that he was firmly resolved to govern in accordance with the principles of the Constitution, and having informed His Majesty of the excellent impression made in England, both in Government circles and on the people at large, His Majesty stated that he depended on His Majesty's Government giving him material and moral support. The reception accorded to me along the entire route from Yildiz to the Sublime Porte furnished ample evidence of the popularity of Great Britain.

A new Cabinet was formed in which Kiamil Pasha was the Grand Vizier. Some little difficulty had occurred in the first days in Constantinople and elsewhere in carrying out the order for the general amnesty for political prisoners, prisoners of all kinds demanding their freedom, and in the most instances obtaining it. The Government found itself in the position of having to choose between this solution and the probable shedding of blood, but, writing now, it is clear that it was a mistake to let loose the band of miscreants whose proper place was within the prison walls and who, in the absence of any organized police, gave themselves up to robbery and disorder.

The early stages of the revolution were, however, distinguished by a remarkable community of enthusiasm on the part of all races and religions throughout the Empire. It was impossible to view, without some scepticism, the picture of Greek and Moslem embracing one another and Moslem and Armenians flaunting their affection for one another. But after the first doubts that were felt in the more remote districts as to whether the movement was sincere, and whether it was not some trick on the part of the Sultan, had passed away, the sense of relief from the autocratic rule of the last thirty years became evident in every corner of the Empire. A profound mistrust, however, of His Majesty pervaded the ranks of the Young Turk party, and it was remarkable how little was heard during the first days of the Caliph, a word which had been such a valuable factor in maintaining the old régime and all its iniquities. The news of the Constitution was generally received in the Asiatic provinces with rejoicing, although in some cases employés of the old régime were roughly handled. The Greeks at Smyrna showed signs of indiscretion in parading the Greek flag, but the temper of the Turks was admirable. At such places as Van, Diarbekr, and Mosul, which members of the League had been unable to visit, there was an inability on the part of the population to accommodate themselves to the new idea of a common country, based on the principles of justice, fraternity, and equality. But the Kurds were the principal ones who showed violence towards the Armenians, but the latter, on the

having been responsible for the release of ordinary criminals together with the amnestied political offenders and with the contradiction between Article X of the Hatt-i-Humayun and Article XXVII of the Constitution concerning the appointment of the Ministers of War and Marine. Saïd Pasha justified the first by his anxiety to avoid possible bloodshed and the second by his reluctance to insist on the Sultan devolving the right to command the land and sea forces, theoretically vested in His Majesty, on Ministers appointed by the Grand Vizier. He said that he had to humour the susceptibilities of the Sultan who rather than consent to the revival of the Constitution, had thought of creating a diversion by provoking complications with Bulgaria and even other Powers, that, though the people reproached him with want of energy, he had within a few days induced the Sultan to consent to the revival of the Constitution, to grant a general amnesty, to abolish the spy system, to dismiss corrupt and obnoxious Ministers and to proclaim a Hatt-i-Humayun which constituted a charter of the people's rights, and that convinced that the internal and external position of the Empire called for a period of gradual rather than abrupt transition, as advocated by the League, from despotic to the liberal régime, he had resigned rather than attempt to make the Sultan move at a pace that he (Saïd Pasha) thought incompatible with the best interests of his country.

I assured the Pasha that we had appreciated his patriotism in taking office at his advanced age and in his feeble state of health at such a crisis in the affairs of the Empire and the astonishing results he had produced in such a short space of time and that he could rely on our doing what was possible, consistent with the new constitutional régime, to prevent his being subjected to the treatment he apprehended. I have since privately and partly indirectly communicated with members of the League and others, deprecating any hostile action against Saïd Pasha and am assured that he will not be molested.

G. H. FITZMAURICE.]

whole, were satisfied at the unexpected release of so many of their co-religionists. The Kurds, Beys, and Aghas were naturally displeased at the new order of things, which they feared meant a régime of law and order instead of a state of disturbance in which they could continue, as in the past, to oppress defenceless Armenians and the subject Kurdish tribes.

It would have been unreasonable to expect that in the wild districts of the interior of Asia Minor a new state of affairs should at once spring up; rather is it matter for wonder that in the necessary absence of new officials, to take the place of the corrupt dismissed or threatened officials, the condition of anarchy was not more complete. The Kurdish Chief Ibrahim, who had been the terror of the Diarbekr district but who had always received some sort of clandestine support from the Palace, was pursued and driven into a corner; he eventually died, and his followers were dispersed and destroyed.

The League of Union and Progress, acting as a vigilance committee, did its work thoroughly, and its agents sprang, as it were, from the ground in every corner of the country. Corrupt Governors and officials, and those on whom any suspicion rested, were immediately dismissed or disappeared. In Constantinople numbers of high officials, who were known to have fattened on the State in every kind of illicit manner, were, without warrants or orders, confined, pending some decision as to their future, and ominous rumours were afloat that the Sultan himself, who could not be trusted by the Young Turks, must either share the fate of his sycophants or perhaps even pay a greater penalty. But the leaders of the movement realized that they would be incurring a grave risk were they to resort to extremities, and that they would not only incur the disapproval of foreign Powers but also of the strict Mahomedans who still looked to their Caliph as the Power to be worshipped. They also regarded His Majesty as a useful figure head and an aid to stability, and thought that his experience might be of service, though they have never made use of it.

In the meantime hundreds who under the old régime had been in exile in remote parts of Turkey or abroad, men who had willingly or unwillingly incurred the displeasure of their Sovereign, were returning. It was remarkable how these men, smarting some of them under the most grave injustice, some of them having suffered frightfully physically, were able to restrain their feelings, and how they quietly endeavoured, without any declared sentiments of rancour, to throw themselves into the new movement. But, exhausted and inexperienced, they were not the men required for the situation, and the lack of officials to fill the numerous offices made itself sadly felt.

The League issued programmes of reforms only to be followed by fresh programmes little of which have yet been put into execution. Most of them admitted the necessity of foreign advice, though most of them dealt with the abolition of the capitulations. Superfluous employes were to be at once dismissed but when attempts to put this into force were made so much dissatisfaction showed itself that a reactionary movement was feared.

It was interesting to note how the declaration of the Constitution and the early days of the movement were viewed outside Turkey. During the first few days English newspaper comments were marked by a distinct note of scepticism and doubt, but when the movement was seen to be general and the Sultan had apparently thrown himself into it, it received the applause of all parties and sympathetic assurances were given on all sides to the Young Turks and the new Government here. Macedonian reform was no longer to be pressed upon an unwilling Turkish Government; that reform it was hoped would come from within. The general argument was to the effect that sympathy has always existed between the people of Great Britain and the population of Turkey and that our grievances were against the Turkish Government only.

In Germany great pains were taken to prove that the events met with the entire approval of the Imperial Government. But here and there it was pointed out that Parliamentary Government was absurd for the Turks and that the new system, attributed to the intrigues of Great Britain, was doomed to failure. But German

newspapers found it difficult to explain away the complete reliance German diplomacy had always placed on the Sultan and his corrupt Camarilla which under the new system were the butt for every form of abuse. The Emperor appeared to console himself with the idea that the fact of Turkey becoming a Constitutional State would have far-reaching consequences in other oriental countries and that His Majesty's Government would find themselves in a position of some embarrassment if, as was likely to happen, India and Egypt put forward claims for a constitutional form of Government. The newspapers were not slow to appreciate that the influence of the German Embassy here had received a severe blow, and with a view to returning to favour they promptly suggested somewhat exaggerated forms of re-acquiring favour, by proposing the immediate abolition of the capitulations.

In Vienna a like scepticism was shown as to the possibility of the introduction of Parliamentary Government, but special anxiety was at once felt as to how Bosnia and Herzegovina would be affected. It was opposed to the advantage of Austria to see Turkey becoming strong and it was consequently improbable that the Young Turks could hope for much support from Austria-Hungary. In such matters as commercial and railway concessions Austria would be more likely to meet with difficulties under the new régime than in dealings with the Palace clique. But on the other hand the necessary withdrawal of the Anglo-Russian reform programme for Macedonia was hailed with satisfaction throughout the Austrian governing circles.

In Russia the movement generally met with a sympathetic approval, and M. Isvolsky from the first expressed considerable confidence in its ultimate success and welcomed it as being the means of saving Great Britain and Russia from a somewhat difficult position. This optimism was not, however, shared by the Russian Ambassador here, who from the first barely concealed his opinion that the Young Turk movement was for one reason or another doomed to failure.

In Bulgaria the scepticism which was evident at first soon gave way to the view that the constitutional régime would enable the Bulgarian element in Macedonia to develop politically and materially, and would assist the return to the Exarchate of villages which during the last three years had been forcibly converted by Greek and Servian bands. On the other hand they were not blind to the possibility that a state of order here might mean that Bulgaria would be in a less favourable position to intervene on behalf of her kinsfolk in Macedonia and fears were expressed that not more than half-a-dozen Bulgarian representatives would be returned to Parliament. As a matter of fact five only were returned. General Paprikoff, however, expressed the gravest apprehensions regarding the course matters were likely to take here, but gave Sir G. Buchanan categorical assurances respecting the pacific intention of his Government. It was obvious, however, that these intentions might be modified if the movement here did not go on smooth lines, and if anarchy succeeded Bulgaria might regard the movement as a favourable opportunity for a more forward policy. Many in Bulgaria founded their hopes on the fact that Great Britain having acquired an enhanced position in Constantinople, her influence might be more successfully brought to bear in favour of the Christian communities in Macedonia. In general, however, the feeling seemed to be that anarchy might ensue in Turkey and that this would offer an opportunity to Bulgaria to realize her aspirations in Macedonia.

In Greece general enthusiasm prevailed amongst the public and in the press, though less in Government circles, and the conviction seemed to prevail that the moment had come for the Hellenic race to show its superiority over the Turkish and Bulgarian elements in Turkey.

Liberty was so much talked of and with so little knowledge of its true meaning that it was rapidly translated into license, and employés in all branches of business conceived that they had a right not only to demand but to insist on an increase of wage. Strikes occurred in every branch of business. The stevedores and ship's labourers, the tobacco régime, the Anatolian Railway, the Turkish Steamship Company, the newspaper employés, tramways, bakers, all participated, and in most cases with the result that the wages were increased. The League was useful in counselling

moderation to the men, but nevertheless the strike movement spread beyond Constantinople and took serious proportions at Smyrna where the English (Smyrna-Aidin) Railway was considerably affected.

A feature of the new movement was that its leaders appeared fully to realize that outside experience was indispensable to enable them to put their house in order. The financial situation seemed to call the loudest for help and they not unnaturally looked for help to France, that country being the most interested. Eventually M. Laurent, President of the Cour des Comptes, was selected, and has now been busily engaged for two months in the examination of the financial situation, with, I believe, somewhat discouraging impressions.

To England the Young Turks applied for an Admiral to put the decaying fleet into order and to utilize the 7,000 officers who have had no practical experience of their career. It was also to Great Britain that the Government turned for a Customs Administrator, and failing to obtain Chitty Bey, on whom they had set their hearts, Mr. Crawford of the English customs-house was appointed.

A section of the public were also very desirous of obtaining the services of General von der Goltz to reorganize the army, and so careful were they, in the early stages of the revolution, not to do anything that might give offence to Great Britain that I was approached as to whether His Majesty's Government would feel any resentment at the employment of that officer. Nothing has however, as yet, come of it.

Every kind of scheme was put forward with a view to the development of the country, and Sir W. Willcocks was promptly engaged as adviser to the Department of Public Works and sent off to make extensive surveys of Mesopotamia, with a view to carrying out large irrigation schemes.

In the meantime, the idea of the Constitution⁽⁴⁾ was being gradually assimilated throughout the country. Amongst the Arabs it produced but little impression, they

No. 199. Ed. Add.

(⁴) *Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.*

F.O. 34291/34291/08/41.
(No. 601.) Confidential.
Sir,

Therapia, D. September 23, 1908.
R. October 5, 1908.

I had yesterday a very long conversation with Ali Haydar Midhat Bey, the son of Midhat Pasha, the famous author of the Constitution [of 1876]. He is a young gentleman of good education who in voluntary exile has devoted much of his time to the work initiated by his father. He is a candidate for Parliament for Constantinople and is certain to be elected, and it may perhaps be worth while very briefly to record the substance of some of his conversation.

Midhat Bey has frequently been invited by the Sultan to go to visit His Majesty, but, although he was desirous of letting bygones be bygones, he hesitated to find himself in the presence of a man whom he regarded as the murderer of his father. However on the fourth invitation he had consented. It is clear that His Majesty had been urged to submit to this probably unpleasant ordeal by the more moderate influences in the Committee, who desire to show to the country that His Majesty is honestly a supporter of the Constitution.

Midhat Bey declares that he found His Majesty in a most nervous condition. He is of opinion that His Majesty is not to be trusted, and that he would still be quite capable of provoking an incident, even to the extent of a war against a foreign Power, if thereby he could bring about the unpopularity and collapse of the present system. He said that there were still some 9,000 men around the Palace of Yildiz and that the Officers, who have purposely been kept by His Majesty in a condition of great ignorance, are very devoted to His Majesty and to the system which was congenial to them owing to the indolent life they led and to the good remuneration they received. The Committee however were very active with these officers and were gradually inculcating in them the ideas of Constitutionalism.

Midhat spoke very highly of Mohammed Reshad, the Sultan's heir. It was this Prince had at one time been too much addicted to the pleasures of the table, but he is a reformed character, and he described him as very moderate in his views and not himself to the ideas of the present movement. From this I gather that the upon to reign, would be merely a tool in the hands of the Committee. Of Midhat Bey said that his advent to the throne would constitute a disaster, as

moderation to the men, but nevertheless the strike movement spread beyond Constantinople and took serious proportions at Smyrna where the English (Smyrna-Aidin) Railway was considerably affected.

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R. October 5, 1908.

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Midhat spoke very highly of Mohammed Reshad, the Sultan's heir. It was true that this Prince had at one time been too much addicted to the pleasures of the table, but he was quite a reformed character, and he described him as very moderate in his views and likely to adapt himself to the ideas of the present movement. From this I gather that the Prince, if called upon to reign, would be merely a tool in the hands of the Committee. Of Youssouf Izzedin Midhat Bey said that his advent to the throne would constitute a disaster, as he was thoroughly

seemed sceptical of reform, tolerating Turkish rule as a Moslem rule, and harbouring some veneration for the Sultan as the religious head of the Ottoman Empire. There were whispers of reaction, but in most cases it could be explained by the hesitation of those, who were not convinced of the future success of the movement, declining to throw themselves into the movement with enthusiasm. The Committee of the League, which showed remarkable evidence of organization, considering they had until July been working in the dark, occupied themselves by sending emissaries into the provinces to explain the nature of the movement, the programme they had for the future, and in some cases, establishing an organization for securing the election of their candidates at the forthcoming elections.

As was to be expected, the re-establishment of the Constitution here not unnaturally produced some movement in Egypt in the same direction, and some enthusiastic Nationalists arrived here clamouring for help and support. But they met with no encouragement. They were told that they were not suffering from corrupt administration; since they had been under British tutelage their resources had not been squandered or their people oppressed, they had enjoyed civil liberties, and had been raised to a condition of prosperity and security unknown before. The emissaries not only met with no encouragement, but were practically forbidden to give vent to the ideas here.

I gradually came into direct personal contact with those who were the leading members of the Committee of the League of Union and Progress, and found them moderate and reasonable, expressing themselves as prepared to be guided by the advice of Great Britain, opposed to drastic measures regarding the Sultan, concerning whose honesty of purpose they still expressed grave doubts. But they appeared to be anxious as to what might be the intentions of Bulgaria, and from the early days of the revolution steps were actively taken with a view to recover lost ground as regards the condition of the army, but the view was generally expressed and I think felt, that any attempt to recover provinces already lost to the Empire must be avoided, as likely to cause complications with other Powers, and endanger the very existence of the new

imbued with Russian ideas. This statement does not agree with our estimate of this Prince, who has generally been considered to have liberal ideas.

Turning to the Cabinet, Midhat Bey said that for a time Kiamil Pasha's position had been somewhat shaken owing to his age and the belief amongst the Young Turks that he was wanting in energy and too ready to meet the Sultan's wishes, but the publication of the King's telegram containing favourable comments regarding his administration had set him on his legs again, and he thought he was secure for some time. Of Hakki Bey, the Minister of the Interior, he spoke in less complimentary terms. That Minister also has in his charge the portfolio of Public Instruction and he had, he said, given great offence by acts of favouritism in the reconstruction of those Ministries. Moreover Hakki Bey had made comments unfavourable to the condition of the Army which, on application to the Minister of War, had not been confirmed by the latter.

This remark led me to think that the question of the efficiency of the Army had possibly been seriously occupying the attention of the Committee with a view to possible eventualities.

I asked Midhat Bey what he thought of the possibility of the return to power of Ferid Pasha, the ex-Grand Vizier. He declared that this was now out of the question. He was too much imbued with German policy here and was profoundly mistrusted. Indeed many went so far as to believe that his advent to power would be the signal for the return of a despotic system of Government. He was, in his opinion, an opportunist in the worst sense of the word and thoroughly unreliable.

Midhat Bey said he believed that the elections would go off with complete calm, and that the vast majority of those returned would represent the views of the Young Turks, but there would certainly be a small minority of reactionaries whose voice would hardly be heard during the earlier stages of the first Parliament. He did not like the idea of Panitza having a place in Parliament. Brigands had no right to that honour, and he thought means would be found to exclude him.

I have, &c.

G. LOWTHER.

order of things. But, unfortunately, an incident arose on the Sultan's birthday on the 12th September, when the Bulgarian Agent, on the plea that he did not represent a foreign Sovereign, was omitted from a dinner party given by the Foreign Minister, with the result that the Bulgarian Agent left.

The striking feature of the Young Turk movement has hitherto been that beyond Enver and Niazi (and these two withdrew into the background), and Ahmed Riza, no special names were mentioned generally as its leaders. The return to this country, however, of Prince Sabah-ed-din, was the signal for a good deal of self advertisement on his part. The son of Mahmoud Pasha, brother-in-law of the Sultan, who more than nine years ago fled the country and died in Paris, he had with his father worked in Paris to upset the Yildiz régime and adopted as his programme the principle of "decentralization and personal initiative." His idea was to get rid of the Macedonian and Armenian questions by some system of local autonomy or independence, and thus save at least the nucleus of the Turkish Empire. But with this programme he found himself in entire opposition to the maxims of the League of Union and Progress, "equal rights for all classes of Ottoman subjects." He endeavoured to explain away his programme and come to terms with the League. Unfortunately, the Prince also gave expression to opinions in favour of the partial emancipation of women which aroused the fanaticism of the less advanced Ulema. The Prince has a great power of speech and his oratory carried some with him, but he has now withdrawn into the background, and it is unlikely that we shall hear much more of him.

It was at the end of October that the first tendency towards reaction made itself sufficiently felt to require notice in despatches. The Arabs wondered how far the Constitution was in accordance with the principles of Holy Law. The apathy of the Syrians towards the Constitution was complained of by the members of the League. At Scutari there were indications of independence on the part of the Albanians.

The Armenians at Van showed signs of arrogance and provocation, whereas the Turks were sullen, subdued, and suspicious.

Rumours were heard as the elections approached of contemplated massacres, none of which were however realized. Some of the emissaries of the Committee, who were sent to Bagdad and elsewhere, went rather far in their preaching of equality, with the result that strife was stirred up between the different religions, and the Delegates did not seem to appreciate that what might be good for Constantinople and the more civilized parts of Turkey could not be applied to the remote towns and villages.

The complications in the Balkans produced their effect in encouraging critics of the Government. The first overt manifestation of reaction was the posting in the Mosque of St. Sophia of placards vilifying the Sheik-ul-Islam, and calling upon true believers to murder him. The ringleaders of this and other similar anti-constitutional movements were arrested, and they were to be tried and probably hanged, but nothing more has been heard of them.

There were certain factors at work directed against the tendencies of reform. The stubborn and unyielding principle of the Moslem religion, which though perhaps less hasty, is more fixed and unrelenting in Turkey than in any other Mahomedan country.

The idea of equality with Christians was abhorrent to them, and there were strong evidences in the provinces that these Moslem tendencies were coming to the fore. The crowd of dismissed officials seemed inclined to join these ranks. The numerous strikes had unsettled the working classes, who were prepared to present fresh demands. There was an influx of disturbing elements from abroad of every description and shade of opinion, Socialists, Russian and Italian anarchists, &c. The police might be said to be non-existent, and it was doubtful as to how far the military could be depended upon, especially those troops which had, under the old régime, been living under the shadow of Yildiz in a condition of comparative ease and luxury, thanks to the generosity of the Sultan. Moreover the attitude of the Sultan appeared to be ambiguous, and the feast of Ramazan appeared to offer every prospect of trouble between the strict

Moslems and the adherents of the new régime and of liberal ideas.⁽⁵⁾ Fears of massacres in Anatolia were almost universal, but nothing occurred.

One disturbance there was in Constantinople, owing to an attempted mutiny on the part of the troops at Yildiz, who were to be sent to Jeddah, but it was promptly dealt with by officers commanding troops recently arrived from Macedonia. Some six men were shot, and there is little doubt the Government, representing as it does the Young Turk party, greatly raised their prestige, and proved that they were not to be trifled with by the manner in which this incident was dealt with.

Less firmness on this occasion would undoubtedly have given encouragement to the reactionaries.

That occult body, the Committee, has from the first worked with great mystery. It had no acknowledged head; occasionally persons crept up who were said to be the leading men, but they disappeared to give way to others. At times we were told that the head-quarters were at Salonica, at others at Constantinople, and then again at Monastir. No individual presided permanently. They seemed to desire to avoid the possibility of any one man coming to the fore. But they were none the less active in working the elections. Some resentment was felt against the Greek element for being cleverer and more accustomed to elections; owing to their ecclesiastical privileges they appeared to be likely to carry more than their fair share of seats. Irregularities were no doubt committed on both sides, but the differences were eventually patched up, and apparently all the elections were carried through without bloodshed or without more ill-feeling than was to be expected in view of the strong religious feeling which cannot fail to exist in this country.

Parliament met on the 17th December, a ceremony surrounded by every show of satisfaction and harmony.⁽⁶⁾ But, contrary to general expectation, the Committee, which as a secret body is forbidden by the Constitution, maintained its existence and influence, and its organs planned a determined attack on the Government.

Whether this attack is prompted by honest motives or whether it harbours the desire on the part of some of the members of the Committee to occupy positions in the Cabinet now filled by persons who are considered not to be entirely in harmony with the views of the Committee, remains to be seen, and the early days of 1909 will show

No. 200. Ed. Add.

(⁵) *Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.*

F.O. 37956/36131/08/44.

(No. 725.)

Sir,

Therapia, D. October 28, 1908.

R. November 2, 1908.

Twenty days ago, on the 11th day of the month of Ramazan, a considerable assemblage of people gathered together, and, having adorned their fezes with turbans, made their way, crying to all who loved God to follow them, to Yildiz, and there they demanded to see the Sultan. The police were endeavouring to disperse them when His Imperial Majesty appeared at the window of his palace whereon one of the leaders of the mob greeted His Majesty as the shepherd of whom the flock were being deprived, solicited the application of the holy law and not of the constitution and bade him have no fear.

His Majesty in reply exhorted them to be tranquil and their desires should be fulfilled, and the police then succeeded in dispersing them, and, finally, in arresting the two ringleaders, named Kior Ali, and Ismail Hakki, a Bosniac.

They were brought to trial before the Criminal Court at Stamboul, and were, the day before yesterday, condemned to death under Article 55 of the Criminal Code, which edicts this penalty for "those who attempt to alter the order of succession to the Throne or the form of the Government." Kior Ali testified that he had had visions, had seen saints, and was sent by the Prophet, and the Court consequently ordered that he should be examined by a doctor to certify whether he was not insane. But the medical examination resulted in an opinion that he was sane.

Both the condemned are to be hung, unless wiser counsels prevail and some less severe penalty is found sufficient for what in the new era of liberty of speech should only be considered as a trivial offence.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

(⁶) [For the Sultan's professed views on the Constitution, v. pp. 262-3, No. 203.]

whether the country is satisfied to be governed by the Moderate party headed by Kiamil Pasha, or by the more advanced section of the Constitutionalists represented by the Committee.

General Foreign Relations.

My lamented predecessor, in his remarks a year ago on the foreign relations of Turkey, said that they might be summarized with about equal utility and assurance in one page or in thirty, but that he preferred the former, as nearly all the forecasts made by his predecessors had failed to stand the tests of time.

In the light of the events of the past six months the observation may be considered as specially happy, as the general foreign relations of the country have undergone a complete metamorphosis, if those relations can be said at present to have got into any fixed groove.

Abdul Hamid's reign has been throughout marked by a distinct unfriendliness on the part of the Turkish Government to Great Britain, and there is no doubt that this was excited by the Sultan and his corrupt *entourage*, while the true feelings of friendliness on the part of the people towards our country were stifled, and they were fully aware that any expression in our favour would be met with severe punishment.

The declaration of the Constitution let loose all the friendship and respect for Great Britain that had been lying dormant, and the people of this country readily understood our position, which was so clearly expounded by Sir Edward Grey, namely, that "we were against the Turkish Government when it was bad, when the forces prevailed in Turkey which were most repugnant to good government, to justice and to liberty, but that between us and the people there was not, and never had been, any barrier."

To account for the admiration for and implicit faith in Great Britain, it may be pointed out that Turks have never forgotten that we fought side by side with them during the Crimean war, and that it was our fleet that saved them from the Russians when the latter were at the walls of Constantinople. Daily references to these facts were made in the early days of the Constitution, and, freed at any rate for the present from the direct influence of her Sovereign, Turkey looked to Great Britain as the great exponent of Constitutional government, to guide her through the difficulties inevitably bound up with a complete reversal of the whole system of government. Few stopped to think as to how Great Britain could assist Turkey or why she should do so, but the Government undoubtedly looked to His Majesty's Government for advice, and it may be honestly said that they have so far followed the counsel given.⁽⁷⁾ Whether the

No. 201. Ed. Add.

(7) *Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.*

F.O. 30324/6/08/44.

(No. 364.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 31, 1908.

The Turkish Chargé d'Affaires inquired of Mr. Mallet on the 26th inst[ant] whether a report which he had seen in the papers as to the intention of the Austro-Hungarian and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts to withdraw their gendarmerie officers from Macedonia was true and whether H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had arrived at any decision as regards their own officers. He gave no indication of the wishes of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t on the subject.

Mr. Mallet informed Djevad Bey that the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t had granted to their officers an unlimited leave of absence and that the Russian Government had not yet reached a definite decision on the question. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had no desire whatever to retain their officers if the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t wished for their removal but the Grand Vizier, in conversation with Y[our] E[xcellency] had seemed to indicate that such was not the case and H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would be glad to learn whether this information coincided with that in the possession of the Turkish Embassy.

Djevad Bey replied that he had no information whatever.

Mr. Mallet said that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t were ready to meet the wishes of the Sublime Porte and were merely keeping their officers at their posts because their too precipitate removal might have been inconvenient to the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t and excite nervousness in official circles at Sofia but there was no wish here to retain the British Officers longer than was necessary.

Turkish Government will in future continue to be guided by the advice tendered by His Majesty's Government remains to be seen. There will inevitably be questions on which there may be differences of opinion, but the essential feature of the policy of the Young Turks in the establishment of a Constitutional régime, encouraged by the early declaration of the Great Powers that they would adopt a policy of benevolent

Djevad Bey appeared perfectly to understand the situation and passed to an enquiry as to what news had been received from Sofia.

Mr. Mallet repeated to him in general terms what he had said to the Bulgarian Acting Agent earlier in the afternoon (see my desp[atch] No. 47 of the 31st inst[ant] to Sir G. Buchanan, copy of which forms the encl[osure] in my desp[atch] No. 365 of the 31st inst[ant]) and expressed his conviction that action on the part of the Bulgarian Gov[ernment] was out of the question, even if they wished to give trouble, owing to lack of support on the part of the Powers.

Djevad Bey went on to discuss the attitude of Russia and Mr. Mallet said that, in his opinion, the ambition of that Power no longer lay in the direction of Constantinople and that he was sure that the Turkish Gov[ernment] need not feel uneasy on the score of Russian hostility, with which view Djevad Bey expressed agreement.

It would, I consider, be unfortunate if the British officers were withdrawn from Macedonia before the pacification of that region is complete and the new régime is firmly established there and the Turkish Gov[ernment] would do much better to utilise their services for some time longer, but should all the other Powers withdraw their officers at once and should the Turkish Gov[ernment] express a desire for the withdrawal of all European officers, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will have no choice but to remove their own.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 202. Ed. Add.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 33186/30912/08/44.
(No. 406.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 19, 1908.

With reference to your despatch No. 552 of the 7th instant and to previous correspondence by telegram, I have to inform you that the Turkish Chargé d'Affaires communicated to the Foreign Office on the 11th instant a telegram which he had received from the Minister for Foreign Affairs asking for the assistance of His Majesty's Government to induce London bankers to come forward with proposals for a Turkish loan of a million Turkish pounds, mentioning at the same time the conditions which were desired.

I at once caused steps to be taken to communicate with Messrs. Rothschild, to inform them of the application made by the Turkish Government, and to ask whether they would be willing to enter into communication with the Turkish Government. I made it clear at the same time that we could not ourselves negotiate on behalf of the Turks.

In view of the fact that the Ottoman Bank was already in negotiation with the Turkish Government for the issue of a loan of three and a half millions sterling, I considered it advisable to inform the French Government of the steps which had been taken by the Sublime Porte, and I pointed out to the French Government that I could not refuse to put the Turkish Government into communication with English bankers in London. The French Government replied that they would welcome the co-operation of British financial houses with the French banks in the issue of a Turkish loan, and they suggested that, as the Imperial Ottoman Bank is an Anglo-French institution, the obvious course to pursue was that English financiers should participate in the Turkish loan to be issued by the Imperial Ottoman Bank.

A few days after communicating with Messrs. Rothschild I was informed by them that they are not in a position to enter into direct negotiations with the Sublime Porte; that so far the English public has abstained during recent years from purchasing Turkish securities, and that an issue in London would meet with little or no support and, in fact, it might be risking failure to attempt one. On the other hand, should the business be concluded with the Ottoman Bank, Messrs. Rothschild would willingly look into the terms, and if in any way they could be of use in helping the Ottoman Bank in London to get British houses interested in the new loan, it would be a great pleasure to them to do so.

I thereupon addressed myself to Messrs. Baring, and I received yesterday a visit from Lord Revelstoke. He pointed out to me very clearly the impossibility, at the present moment of issuing a Turkish loan in the London market. Such a situation would possibly not exist in the future, if the present Administration consolidates itself in Turkey, more especially when Parliament has met. The difficulty of participating in the loan to be issued by the Ottoman Bank consists in the fact that the French financiers would probably demand that that part which was to be subscribed by the British houses should be issued on the London market, and this operation

expectancy, was not to attempt to recover lost provinces but to hold stoutly to what still remained to this country. There have been no murmurs and lamentations over Cyprus and Egypt, and the general view has been that Egypt has under British rule, as well as Cyprus, been blessed by a good government such as is looked for here under the new régime.

[For continuation *v.* p. 272.]

would be foredoomed to failure. Messrs. Baring would therefore prefer not to participate nor to enter at the present moment into competition with the French bankers, but would reserve themselves for future opportunities when the circumstances in Turkey were more favourable.

The Turkish Chargé d'Affaires called yesterday afternoon at the Foreign Office, and was informed by Sir Charles Hardinge that, much to my regret, it was not possible for British financiers to issue a Turkish loan at the present moment. It was pointed out to him that, two or three months ago, such an idea would have been quite impossible, and that even now the result would be doubtful until confidence in the stability of the present régime at Constantinople has been established.

Djevad Bey was assured that His Majesty's Government are most anxious to attract British capital into Turkey for *bond fide* concessions and commercial enterprises, and that they are sincerely desirous that, with the continuation of the present enlightened Administration in Turkey, the entry of British capital into Turkey should not be greatly delayed.

Djevad Bey was told that the decision of the Banks was in reality in the best interests of the credit of the Ottoman Government, since it would be better to have no loan at all than to risk a failure.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 203. Ed. Add.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 40852/39815/08/44.

(No. 773.)

Sir,

Pera, D. November 13, 1908.

R. November 28, 1908.

I have the honour to report that I was to-day received in audience by His Imperial Majesty the Sultan for the purpose of thanking him for his kind attentions on the occasion of His Majesty The King's Birthday.

His Imperial Majesty looked somewhat more careworn than when I last saw him some two months ago. He began by expressing his great pleasure at the King's reply to his telegram of congratulation on the 9th of November. He warmly appreciated the expression it contained of His Majesty's wishes for the preservation of peace and tranquillity, saying that he was well aware that the King's best endeavours were devoted to the maintenance of peace in the world, a boon that was especially necessary to Turkey at the present moment. The Sultan asked me to have conveyed to His Majesty his deep sense of gratitude for the friendly and efficacious support his country had during recent events received from His Majesty The King and his Government. He had, he said, just received a telegraphic summary from his Ambassador in London of the Prime Minister's speech at the Guildhall and he was deeply touched at its tone of genuine sympathy for Turkey. His Majesty expressed warm admiration of British political institutions of which he thought the House of Lords was the mainstay and pivot. Alluding to the recent female suffragists incident in the Ladies' Gallery of the House of Commons, he gave it as his view that incidents or changes in the Lower House were devoid of importance as long as the House of Lords, the element of stability, remained intact. He said that Parliamentary institutions were something peculiar to England and that other countries, though they had imitated them, had never succeeded in actually applying them. The Ottoman Senate had not yet been formed, but he had requested the Grand Vizier to submit him a list of suitable candidates and he was anxious that they should be chosen among experienced and level-headed men so as to minimize the risk of conflict between the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies. His people, he said, had practically no experience of Parliamentary institutions and no doubt mistakes would be made at first, but he felt confident that in a couple of years Constitutional Government, to which he had unreservedly committed himself, would mature and be consolidated.

His Majesty added that he was most fortunate in having such an experienced and reliable Grand Vizier as Kiamil Pasha, in whom he reposed the greatest confidence, and who had saved him from much trouble and worry during the recent crisis. He complained of the insinuations and attacks of a portion of the local and foreign press against the Grand Vizier and himself, but, he said, he would not attach importance to this and was firmly resolved to rely on Kiamil Pasha who enjoyed on the whole the confidence of the people and to persevere with him in the path of Constitutional Government on which his country had entered. The English press, he remarked, were more reliable in their news and more sober in their comments both as regards Turkey and himself than a great part of the continental press which teemed with inventions and distortions of fact concerning the internal situation. This difference His Majesty attributed

** [[The following private correspondence of Sir Edward Grey, Sir Gerard Lowther and Mr. Fitzmaurice is given here as illustrating their general views on the Young Turkish Revolution and its progress. It is printed in large type in order to differentiate from their more official papers annexed to the Annual Report.

No. 204. Ed. Add.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir Gerard Lowther.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Lowther,

July 31, 1908.

You have reached Constantinople at a most favourable and interesting moment. How little we either of us foresaw, when you were appointed, the reception you would actually get!

The telegrams and my speech in Parliament will have explained to you my attitude. We should avoid making the Turks suspicious by attempting to take a hand where we are not wanted: but we should make them understand that, if they are really going to make a good job of their own affairs, our encouragement and support will be very firm, and that we shall deprecate any interference from outside on the part of others. I do not mean that we should go to the length of intervention to protect them; but that our diplomatic attitude will be benevolent, and our influence used to secure a fair chance for them.

Of course, things cannot continue going on as well as they are at present, and it is impossible to say what troubles there may be before us. But we must make it clear that our quarrels have been, not with the Turkish people, but with the government of creatures against whom the Turks themselves have now protested.

If Turkey really establishes a Constitution, and keeps it on its feet, and becomes strong herself, the consequences will reach further than any of us can yet foresee. The effect in Egypt will be tremendous, and will make itself felt in India. Hitherto, wherever we have had Mahometan subjects, we have been able to tell them that the subjects in the countries ruled by the head of their religion were under a despotism which was not a benevolent one; while our Mahometan subjects were under a despotism which was benevolent. Those Mahometans, who have had any opportunity of comparing the conditions of Mahometans ruled by the Sultan and the conditions of those ruled by us, have generally been ready to admit the difference in our favour. But if Turkey now establishes a Parliament and improves her Government, the demand for a Constitution in Egypt will gain great force, and our power of resisting the demand will be very much diminished. If, when there is a Turkish Constitution in good working order and things are going well in Turkey, we are engaged in suppressing by force and shooting a rising in Egypt of people who demand a Constitution too, the position will be very awkward. It would never do for us to get into conflict on the subject of Egypt, not with the Turkish Government, but with the feeling of the Turkish people.

I give this as only one of the matters which will require careful handling, some time sooner or later.

to the fact that the correspondents of most English papers were of a higher class and better informed about things Turkish.

In taking leave the Sultan requested me to be the medium of conveying to His Majesty The King his warmest greetings and the expression of his heartfelt gratitude for the support which His Majesty, his Government and people had recently evidenced towards Turkey, a support on the continuance of which he confidently relied.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

(¹) [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

Meanwhile, as regards Turkey herself, our course is clear: we must be ready to help the better elements, to wait upon events, and give sympathy and encouragement when required to the reform movement.

I have spoken very cordially to the Turkish Ambassador to-day about the turn events have taken in Turkey, and I shall be most interested to hear from you what your impressions are.

Please send me your views quite freely, and give me any suggestions and advice which you may think wise.

[Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.]

No. 205. Ed. Add.

Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

Therapia, August 4, 1908.

The astonishing changes which I found taking place on my arrival here were difficult to realize for one who had known the country previously though perhaps not in the worst days of the Dictatorship. But I was at once struck with the impression that the "Ottoman League of Progress and Union" lacked responsible leaders of position. There were leaders and groups without end all representing various views and it is really a wonder, under the circumstances that things have gone as well as they have and that there has as yet been no bloodshed. The seriousness of aim and the strong patriotic spirit which animates the members of the movement have been remarkable. The accuracy of their calculations and the extreme prudence with which they proceeded are proved by the fact that altho' the movement was precipitated by some months all went off, especially at first, extremely well.

As we were considered in many quarters to have been instrumental in bringing about the change our position was a good one and our congratulations and expressions of sympathy gratefully received. There was some doubt when I arrived as to the rank and file of the army which, it was feared, might go with the Sultan and upset the Constitution which H[is] M[ajesty] had granted. It was caused by an idea that got abroad that the Committee wanted to depose the Sultan.

Unfortunately just as things were going well for us came this tiresome Izzet Pasha incident. He escaped on the British vessel "Maria" and was stopped at the Dardanelles. Nothing would make them believe that we could not take him off so that he might be torn to pieces by the infuriated crowd. He was in the German Embassy for a day and it looked suspiciously as if they had purposely landed him on to us but I don't think they had anything to do with his means of escape. Anyhow the incident is closed and its bad effect, as far as we are concerned, will, I hope gradually disappear. I may say that I sent for the Englishman who sold him the vessel and gave him a polite headwashing. He realized how injudicious he had been, but presumably the hope of large profits had momentarily warped his judgment.

Altho' every one is a Young Turk now, (some say including the Sultan) it seems too much to believe that they will, for long, be able to live up to their motto of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and that the Mahomedan can suddenly drop all his pre-conceived ideas and shake hands with his Christian countryman as if they were one but the inborn divergence of views may not make itself felt until the Elections. The Sultan is having some difficulty in forming a Ministry as the

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

Young Turks really want to nominate their own men and on this even they are not agreed.

I thought, that the Sultan, the greatest of living Comedians, was unique when he posed before the crowds as the simple and loving father of his people who for 40 years had been deceived by his advisers as to their real wishes.

Should the Khedive touch on the question of the granting of the Constitution in connection with Egypt what language would you wish me to hold to him?

Believe me,

dear Sir Edward,

Yours sincerely,

GERARD LOWTHER.

No. 206. Ed. Add.

Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

Therapia, August 11, 1908.

I had a very long conversation with the Grand Vizier yesterday. The gist of it was the following. From one end of the Empire to the other England was regarded as the natural friend and Russia as the natural enemy of Turkey. He expressed the earnest hope that it might be found possible in future to allow Russia to be put forward in all questions of remonstrances as regards Macedonia and elsewhere and that England should only act as supporting these remonstrances with the other Powers. He appeared to have no confidence whatever in Russia or any of the engagements which she would forget directly the moment was opportune for making an attack on this country. It was undoubtedly her desire to unite Bulgaria, Servia and Montenegro into one large Slav Kingdom and threaten Turkey. I said that as he seemed to fear an aggressive attitude on the part of Russia and of Bulgaria the best way to avoid it would be to institute the necessary reforms internally and thus give no cause for interference which might have the support of other Powers.

The situation is as favourable as can be expected and the wonderful organization of the League is now becoming apparent. The Grand Vizier did the only thing possible under the circumstances and consulted the wishes of the League in the formation of his Government.

I told the Grand Vizier I thought he should begin by cleansing the Department of Justice and having good Police.

I do not wish to appear over sanguine and undoubtedly we must expect breakers ahead. There is a small party in the League who want to get rid of the Sultan as they do not trust him even with his wings so completely clipped as they are and as you know the next in succession would be the feeblest of figure heads. But I hope that the Sultan may by generous acts and by throwing himself completely into the movement maintain his great popularity throughout the country. The Sheikh-ul-Islam is not very secure but moderate counsels seem to be prevailing with the League.

The difficulty is how to treat the great band of robbers and whether it will be possible to prove them guilty. I think it would be better not to pursue the matter too far or the accused will doubtless incriminate the Sultan who would then soon fall from the pedestal on which he is placed by the bulk of his people.

It will be interesting to see how the German Ambassador is treated on his return. All his friends are now locked up and his position will be difficult. I wish there were a possibility of getting rid of the Frenchman.

There should now be great openings to *bonâ fide* British business and I hope the shyness regarding Turkey in financial circles may disappear. There seems no

(¹) [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

reason why their finances should not very easily be put right. And they will surely want to buy ships.

The ovation I received the day I presented my letters was a truly remarkable sight for this country and evidently quite spontaneous.

Yours sincerely,
GERARD LOWTHER.

No. 207. Ed. Add.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir Gerard Lowther.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Lowther,

Foreign Office, August 11, 1908.

. . . . (2) What has happened already in Turkey is so marvellous that I suppose it is not impossible that she will establish a Constitution, but it may well be that the habit of vicious and corrupt government will be too strong for reform and that animosities of race and religion will again produce violence and disorder. Or out of the present upheaval there may be evolved a strong and efficient military despotism. The effect upon the politics of Europe of a strong and reformed Turkey would be very great. But it is too soon to speculate upon these contingencies.

For the moment good influences seem to be uppermost, the dislike of the old régime and the desire for something better are strong, the rejoicing at the upset of the old and the prospect of a new régime is genuine; our course is clear; we must welcome and encourage this prospect as long as it continues. But we must be careful not to give Russia the impression that we are reverting to the old policy of supporting Turkey as a barrier against her and should continue to show willingness to work with Russia when possible.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

⁽²⁾ [The earlier part of this letter is printed below, p. 309, No. 214.]

No. 208. Ed. Add.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir Gerard Lowther.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Lowther,

Fallodon, August 23, 1908.

Ahmed Riza asked to see me when he was in Paris and on the point of starting for Constantinople; he offered to come to London for the purpose, but I cannot, unless it is urgently necessary, be in London till Sept[embe]r. I am told he is a remarkable man, and, if so, I am sorry to have missed seeing him and would certainly see him whenever he comes to London later on.

Meanwhile you will probably see him and whether for that or for other occasions I send you such suggestions as occur to me.

1. The Young Turks should not try to go too fast; if they do they may either create confusion or provoke reaction. The first important point is to get the Government into the hands of honest and capable men; if they do that the rest will follow.

2. Sound finance is the basis of all good government and Cromer's advice about a civil list for the Sultan is very much to the point.

3. We shall do all in our power to encourage them as long as they do well and we shall not embarrass them by demands of our own; just as we used all our influence, when Turkish Gov[ernmen]t was bad, to press reforms from outside, so now if reforms are being developed from inside we shall use all our influence to prevent their being interfered with from outside.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

We shall hope and expect British capital to be given good opportunities; but we shall not support it in demanding onerous or unsound terms.

It seems to me that the Smyrna-Aidin railway which has no kilometric guarantee is, for instance, an example of British capital invested in Turkey on sound terms as contrasted with railways financed by kilometric guarantees.

I was distressed to find when I came into office how completely we had been ousted from commercial enterprises in Turkey and how apparently hopeless it was to get any footing there. That was why I encouraged co-operation with the French; it seemed as if British enterprise by itself had no prospect.

Since then I have been disappointed to find what a very poor set of financiers had got commercial enterprise in Turkey into their hands. It was, I suppose, inevitable under the old regime, for its methods were such that it did not attract the best class of financier. If Turkey puts its house in order I hope that good financiers here will come forward and by degrees strengthen the British influence in such things as the Ottoman Bank and enable us to co-operate with the French at least on equal terms.

It will also I hope improve the quality of French Finance in Turkey.

This last part is of course most confidential and for your own information only.

Y[ou]rs etc.,

E. GREY.

No. 209. Ed. Add.

Sir Gerard Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

British Embassy, Constantinople,

August 25, 1908.

Considering that the country is being run by the Committee of the League, a collection of good-intentioned children, things are going pretty well. The situation is that the Committee has replaced the Sultan and the Government have replaced H[is] M[ajesty]'s Secretaries and A.D.C.'s and do the bidding of the Committee.

The Gov[ernment] will hardly be tolerated after Parliament meets and then they will require men with bolder and more modern ideas but with, I fear, less sense of responsibility and less knowledge of the many difficulties in the government of this great Empire.

Since I last wrote to you the feeling against the Sultan increased a good deal and this was formed by those returning here after many years of exile and suffering and who were eager for some kind of revenge and these included many Generals and highly-placed officers but I believe the moderate party prevail in the Committee and they see the danger that would be created by any violent acts. Just now the Committee are very anxious to obtain the applause of Europe and are constantly asking advice which one has necessarily to exercise great caution and care in giving.

The Russian Ambassador cannot bring himself to believe in the possibility of things going well and ill conceals his dissatisfaction at what has occurred.

Those who know the country well, but one is inclined to ask oneself if any European ever knows the East, appear to anticipate that if trouble is to come, it will be between the different sections of Christians and not between Christians and Turks. I do not believe the Greeks, in and out of the country view the movement with much favour. They fear it may rejuvenate Turkey and thus put an end to their aspirations; but the Armenians fully approve and are going into it heart and soul. The Bulgarians cannot like it and one wonders how Prince Ferdinand will be able to keep that large army quiet. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

GERARD LOWTHER.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter describes further the Turkish situation, but adds nothing of great importance.]

No. 210. Ed. Add.

*Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice to Mr. Tyrrell.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Tyrrell,

*British Embassy, Constantinople,**August 25, 1908.*

I have been craving to write to you any time during the last four weeks but, as I told you once, a dragoman is merged in his chief and as I have only politics to write about, one is afraid of saying something which may not fit in with one's chief's views. However one can avoid pitfalls by confining oneself to generalities. I know you must have been, and are intensely interested in recent developments in this Country. I feel too that with the ordinary data you have divined and gleaned all that underlies a movement which has so dramatically swept away what future historians will probably consider one of the most extraordinary specimens of despotic Government, especially at the end of the XIX Century. For whatever the future may have in store for us the peculiar system which was built up by, or grew up around the personality of Abdul Hamid is gone for ever. We are by no means out of the wood and the desperate spasm in Ottoman national life which, in a violent and desperate effort of the instinct of self preservation, destroyed in a night the web of tyranny woven with consummately diabolical skill during the last thirty years may yet lead to some big catastrophe and thus prove to have been the last flicker of the candle of the dying Turk. In that case the Hamidian régime may come to be looked upon as a last attempt to stem the current of economic forces from the West which have been gathering strength and threatening the primitive organism of Ottoman pre-economic life. It is however useless to speculate on the future. The die is cast and one must hope for the best, but the task of fusing and welding into one common Ottoman nationality the mosaic of creeds, nationalities and tongues that go to make up the Ottoman Empire will require iron determination and will tax the energies of the stoutest of hearts.

The causes, I suppose are remotely the victories of Japan which gave a filip to national oriental life in India and Persia. The success of Japan over Russia the traditional enemy of the Turk made every fibre of the latter's body tingle. His national pride—that of a race with a great past, was wounded at seeing the “contemptible” Persians making a bid for a new national life, at a time when Turkey owing to the despotism of the Sultan was more than ever threatened by the degrading and increasing tutelage of Western Powers in the European provinces. Feeling from one's contact with the Turks that we were in the hour before the dawn of his renewed national existence I began to look upon our attempts at reform in Macedonia as a potential anachronism and several times to O'Connor and Barclay characterized our policy there as “insane.” One felt that it no way took into account the bedrock trend of things in the Country, ignoring as it did the fact that the Turks existed and still possessed vitality. The Turks felt that the situation was a desperate one and required a desperate remedy. The meeting at Reval where they saw England and Russia actually combining in an “Anti-Turkish” policy quickened their decision which was to attempt their *coup* before the British proposals born at Reval were presented to the Porte. Increasing the pace lead [*sic*] to indiscretion and the consequent discovery by the Palace of the conspiracy. The outbreak had been planned for the Sultan's accession on September 1st but the effort of the Palace to strangle the movement forced Niazi Bey and Enver Bey into the open with the results, as we know, that, the minds of everybody being disgusted and desirous of a change, the torch lighted by him started a conflagration which swept up to the Palace gates with bewildering rapidity. Curiously enough, I staid [*sic*] in town in June after the Embassy came out to Therapia with the intention of clearing up a lot of cases at the Palace before Lowther arrived and my general feel [*sic*] there was that the Sultan's 1st Secretary had lost faith and hope in the system of

(1) [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

Hamidian rule which he typified, so much so that I said to Barclay some fifteen days before the actual outbreak that I should not be surprised at any moment—even before I got to the bottom of the stairs at the top of which we were standing—to hear 101 Guns and the proclamation of the Constitution. When the Sultan yielded one felt that all the entanglement of reform schemes in Macedonia which for years past have been occupying our Embassy to the exclusion of genuine British interests had been swept away—that a new era had dawned for the unfortunate remnants of the Armenian race in Bitlis Mush, Van &c. and that the best policy was to go heart and soul with the Constitutional movement. I drove at once to the Grand Vizier's house and told him the one important thing to do was to get the Sultan out and establish contact between him and his people. The Grand Vizier had a most difficult task to perform but succeeded with the result that the Sultan was greeted with something like the same popular outburst of enthusiasm as was witnessed in London when the Queen came out during the Boer War. I have urged Kiamil Pasha to get him over to St. Sophia but the Sultan's timidity and suspicions are his worst enemies. He cannot go out to his Wat Tyler with the result that the latter in the shape of the military and Young Turks are seriously thinking of getting rid of him. They simply loathe him and think him capable of bringing in Russia and Bulgaria with a view to overthrowing the Constitution. As for us we have the ball at our feet to the great chagrin of our German friends who pivoted their policy on the Sultan and his Camarilla. I saw the Minister of Public Works who was a member of the Armenian National Assembly when I was at Birejik working for the Armenians. I have made him as keen as myself on Willcock's schemes in Mesopotamia. I have lent him Sir W. W[illcock]'s reports and the latter is coming up from Cairo. Irrigation must precede the railway in Mesopotamia and if we get the former there is every chance of everything up to Mosul being done by us. One hopes fervently that our people will not lose the present golden opportunity after being out in the cold all these years. The iron is hot and we must get a few of them to strike. It may cool before long.

At the present moment Yildiz has been all but obliterated and replaced by the League of Union and Progress. But the Turkish people after their 30 years of despotism are like a 2 year old infant that can't walk firmly and is somewhat inarticulate. They are very raw and the Gov[ernment] as such is none too strong. It has to lean on the League which finds that it cannot retire into the background but is obliged—to preserve from danger the liberty it has just won—to practically run the Empire—in a visible or occult form. They have many of the requisites of successful national leaders—are impersonal and have a great sense of responsibility but they and the Ministry under Kiamil (who is over 80 and may be called the G.O.M. of Turkey) have a heavy task before them. There are many rocks ahead—the internal ones certain and the external ones potential. Of the former the most dangerous is the economic one.

Under the old régime the Mahomedan battered at the expense of the Christian. Under the new which is based on justice, equality and economic reform, crowds of Moslems are being turned adrift and, being unable to earn a competency, are certain to become malcontents while the Xtians,—viz. Armenians, Bulgarians, Greeks &c., while willing to let bygones be bygones, are certain to thrive and prosper and thus further oust the Moslem who is almost entirely devoid of business aptitudes. The latter being the dominant element will not be content to starve in his own country and, unless the movement is skilfully guided, is almost certain to become discontented with a system which to him will seem to be dealing a deadly blow at Islam. In such an eventuality they are certain to appeal to the Emblem of their religion,—the Caliphate and, if the occupant is a reactionary like Abdul Hamid, it is not difficult to foresee a desperate internal struggle accompanied by disorders which will give any lurking external enemy like Russia the chance of upsetting a system, which, if successful, bids fair to make the crescent a permanent ornament on St. Sophia. It must be a bitter pill to Russia to see her cherished hopes

jeopardised by a revolution which may conceivably make Turkey a strong and aggressive Power determined to win back her old provinces in the Caucasus, the Crimea, the Balkans &c. In fact the present movement in Turkey is a virtual challenge to Russian policy during the last 130 years. Of course there is a liberal and Constitutional party in Russia, but I fancy the vast majority in the Country have not divorced themselves from the old anti-Turkish ideas and would like to assist at a *Te Deum* in St. Sophia.

Assuming that things go smoothly and that the Constitutional régime solidifies, the Turks, who are now extra pleasant to foreigners as they are dependent on the sympathy of the latter are certain to develop highly pronounced nationalist if not chauvinistic tendencies. They will want to assert themselves strongly in questions such as Crete, Egypt, Macedonia, Bosnia, Aden, Lebanon, Cyprus and probably our special position at Bagdad with its sepoy guard and the "Comet"—not to mention Lynch's present irregular status in navigating the Tigris on the strength of a disputed ferman for the Euphrates. There are a host of such questions giving us all food for reflection and which we must be prepared to deal with in a non-nagging spirit. The questions with which the Turks are certain to busy themselves with [*sic*] in the immediate future are the Commercial Treaties,—the improvement of their post offices leading up to the suppression of foreign P.O's and setting their judicial house in order with a view to the abrogation of the Capitulations, with Cavasses, Dragomans, Stationnaires &c. In fact if things go favourably for the Turks, foreign Embassies here will [be] gradually reduced to the humdrum state of such institutions in other Countries. One can easily imagine a state of things where foreigners of three generations in Turkey will have to serve in the Turkish army. One often wonders how the problem of Xtians serving in that army is to be worked out. It's one of the "pivotal facts" of the situation.

At the present moment "English Kiamil" is in power but there is a strong party who would like to see Herr von Ferid Pasha the ex-Grand Vizier return to office. Kiamil they think is too old to deal with a critical state of affairs like the present while Ferid is young (55), energetic and intelligent. He is however false and vindictive while in the past he has been closely connected with the Pro-German policy of Yildiz. Hussein Hilmi might be an alternative. One has been suggesting to them that Kiamil ought to remain in office until after the first session of Parliament, and that in keeping an old hand at the helm during the period of transition they would be imitating the Japs with their Marshal Oyama, Ito, &c. &c. instead perhaps of imitating the French who took 100 years to settle down after sweeping away the old lot in their revolution. In fact one feels already that the cries of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity smack too much of the French Revolution and are scarcely suited to the Turkish character.⁽²⁾

Y[ou]rs v[er]y sincerely,
G. H. FITZMAURICE.

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to personal matters.]

No. 211. Ed. Add.

Mr. G. H. Fitzmaurice to Mr. Tyrrell.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Tyrrell,

British Embassy, Constantinople,

January 11, 1909.

You know I purposely don't write often as I have nothing to write about but "politics" and it is difficult to touch upon them without perhaps saying something that may not seem to coincide with what my chief writes. I feel, however, I must break the rule at the beginning of the year to send you my best wishes for 1909. I hope on the whole you are pleased with the doings of our Turkish friends since their Revolution. For it was the Reval meeting which made them quicken their pace and evolve before the appointed time. In swinging

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

away with it without a second's hesitation we brought out with a rush all the latent pro-English sympathies which we had nursed during the anti-English and Pro-German Hamidian régime, were able to take the wind out of the sails of the Extremists in Egypt—thus facilitating Gorst's task—struck the imaginations of and favourably impressed Indian Mahomedans—thus lightening the task of the Gov[ernment] of India—and were able to advise and guide these people who at first were like children newly born into the world of freedom. The elections were safely tided over and, though there were fearful blemishes in the way of anti-Christian jerry-mandering, quite contrary to the newly proclaimed principle of Equality, it seemed best to condone such imperfections, though really they constituted gross abuses of power by the omnipotent "Committee" which had replaced Yildiz and was gradually assuming its despotic methods. Then came the incident of the Balcan [*sic*] Committee dinner with the Grand Vizier who resented the action of some of the younger bloods of the Committee of Union and Progress in inviting Buxton and Co. to his house without consulting H.H. The young bloods happened to be members of the Head Centre and vented their spleen against Kiamil by deciding upon—and exerting their great influence to bring about his downfall, relying especially on their big majority in the Chamber as the result of their tactics during the elections. Here however they made their mistake. For the moderates summoned up courage, went for the Committee which was beginning to imitate "La Terreur," and rallied to the side of the Grand Vizier all those who could at all shake themselves free from the trammels of the Committee. The latter's majority has been gradually dwindling and at tomorrow's sitting in the "House," the Committee if it ventures to try conclusions will probably find itself in a considerable minority. All this is healthy and sound and helps towards the stability of the new régime. For the existence of an irresponsible and secret body claiming executive and administrative powers side by side with the Porte and Parliament would have produced an impossible state of things. They have now been rudely shaken and the Ottoman Government correspondingly strengthened.

In external matters it is to be hoped that the Balcan horizon which recently was shrouded in the darkness that usually precedes the dawn, will soon clear up. D'Aehrenthal has yielded to the gentle persuasion which takes its name from Capt[ain] Boycott and his offer of £12,500,000 will almost certainly lead to a settlement, thus detaching Austria from Bulgaria. The latter will, it is expected, soon make a further offer and Kiamil Pasha with his position now strengthened against irresponsible extremists will be ready to meet them half way. I had two long talks with him today and urged on him to be lenient on the Bulgars with a view to rapidly getting back to neighbourly relations, thus favourably affecting the Macedonian Bulgars who are sore at the way they have been jockeyed in the elections. He is inclined to be most reasonable. Then will come our Cretan labyrinth which seems bristling with difficulties. As I write the cavass has just laid on my table a long telegram in Turkish to the Ambassador signed by the prominent Moslems of Rhodes protesting against Crete being annexed and appealing to the Four Powers to respect their engagement to maintain Ottoman suzerain rights. Its a most difficult question to tackle by frontal attack and the easiest if not automatic solution may lie in allowing Turkey to growl at and threaten Greece. The latter then may be able to swallow her *amour-propre* and disavow the annexation or tell the Cretans to let sleeping dogs, *i.e.* the *status quo*, lie. This would help to get over the acute phase of the difficulty which will, one hopes, be ultimately solved, though Greece and Turkey may come to the brink of war before the solution is reached. If Athens gets frightened she may drop Crete like a hot potato, after which the Powers may deal with the question in July next. There has been the idea of giving old Kiamil Pasha a G.C.B. as a distinguished elder statesman who has served his country for over 50 years and during the last five stormy months has piloted her through many rocks and shoals. The only Turk that has received the honour of an English decoration during the last forty years was a certain Sir Reshid Pasha, K.C.M.G. who died a couple of years ago.

He was Governor of the Dardanelles in 1877-78 when the fleet was at Besika Bay and came up to Constantinople. At first it was feared in August last Kiamil might fall at any moment and his case would resemble that of the ex-Grand Vizier Pasha who received an Aigle Noir from the German Emperor the day of his dismissal. Then it was suggested he should get it just before the opening of Parliament, but the same fear made you hesitate until he is well in his Parliamentary stride. If it had been given to him it would have come as an answer to the cabal of young gentlemen of the Committee who were just then plotting against him and found it necessary to first prove to their fellow Committeemen that Kiamil did not enjoy British favour. Bar exceptional circumstances, he ought to be now safe for some months to come. Of course a man of his age can't go on for ever. He has done about 12 to 15 hours' hard work *every* day since Aug. 5th. He is pro-English to infatuation and as we do not abuse our influence by asking for any exclusive concessions as the Germans did, his maintenance in power does not tarnish our good name. Though we do not bring off any brilliant coups in the way of concessions &c., yet by carefully guiding and nurse [*sic*] the pro-English sentiments of the Turks we are indirectly benefiting our trade to a very great extent. The statistics of English imports into Turkey during the last few months would, I think, show this.

George Lloyd who may meet you one of these days has just been here on a flying visit. We have had some long and amusing yarns and he will be able to give you some of the side lights and quaint tints and hues of our kaleidoscopic situation during the last few weeks. Ask him to give a definite opinion as to how events are likely to shape in Turkey in the near future. I must apologise for inflicting this long sermon upon you who have so many other matters than Turkey to deal with. The rareness of the infliction must be its excuse. Again a happy 1909.

Yours very sincerely,
G. H. FITZMAURICE.]] **

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(1908) continued
from p. 262.

As the German Emperor had openly and repeatedly declared himself the friend of the Sultan, and as German purveyors and contractors had fattened on Turkey during this régime, and had shared the spoils with the hateful Camarilla of the Palace, so, with its downfall, was German political influence arrested, and the odium that fell upon the Hamidian fabric had inevitably to be shared by the Germans here. All the declarations of German newspapers, all the protestations of her Ambassador to the effect that Germany had been working to bring about this new régime, which they declared they hailed with delight, were ignored or called forth a smile.⁽⁸⁾

Austria had to some extent shared the advantages gained by Germany here, and her position during the last months of the old régime had been much strengthened. Indeed her cherished railway scheme through the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, which would bring her nearer to Salonica and the goal of her ambition, appeared about to be realized, but the declaration of the Constitution brought about a great change, for Baron d'Aehrenthal, no doubt imagining that the new régime would interfere with the *status quo* in Bosnia and Herzegovina, decided on the annexation of these provinces. A storm of indignation was called forth against Austria-Hungary, demands for compensation were refused, a boycott of Austrian goods and shipping was enforced, and at the end of the year, the demand for compensation being still ignored, relations were extremely strained, though, with all the resentment that was felt, few sane Turks contemplated an attack on Austria or even considered that a war might be thrust upon the Empire.

France shares with Great Britain the approval of the Turkish Government and people, as representing liberal ideas and because it is in France that the majority of the reformers have been educated, while the greater number of Turkish political exiles took up their domicile in Paris, and it is to France that the new régime, as the

⁽⁸⁾ [G.P. XXV, II. Ch. 191, *passim*. For Austro-Hungarian attitude *re* Novibazar railway, *v. infra* Chap. XXXIX, *passim*.]

old, looks for financial assistance, but at the same time, as against Germany, some soreness is felt in respect of the Bagdad Railway bargain, and there is, as regards France, a suspicion that some of the financial operations recently concluded have been too much in favour of French bankers and not quite fair to the Turkish people.

Italy may be said to have improved her position somewhat since the initiation of the new régime owing to indications of the resentment felt by her at the action of Austria and the inclination towards detaching herself from the Triple Alliance, and the Turkish Government has shown signs of coquetting somewhat with Italy. She is, however, mistrusted by the Turks in connection with Italian designs on Tripoli and Albania, and M. Tittoni's speech at Catane did not naturally tend to allay their suspicions.

Of Russia little has been heard. That Government have protested that they favoured the new order of things, but the Ambassador here barely concealed his doubts as to whether the people would be able to carry through such a drastic change. When the Conference was first mooted there was some talk of raising the question of opening the Straits to Russian ships, but the public generally did not realize that there could be a question of giving the privilege to Russia alone, and after an announcement that the question was to be considered by the Conference, all discussion of it was dropped. Some suspicion is always entertained of Russia in Turkey, but generally speaking the action of Austria may be said to have somewhat improved the position of Russia here.

Bulgaria's action in declaring her independence and her Prince a Czar were deeply resented here, but as this act coincided with the breach of the Treaty of Berlin by Austria, it was less keenly felt than it would otherwise have been, as many Turks, too, privately felt that Bulgaria's action was but natural. Taken unawares and in an unprepared condition, the attitude and language of Turkey was moderate, but she hastened to make the necessary preparations to enable her to speak with a louder voice. There are many champions of an understanding, even an alliance, with Bulgaria, but this will be difficult to realize as long as Bulgaria does not abandon her designs on the Macedonian provinces, and it may be asked what is to be the policy of Bulgaria if she has to renounce all idea of expansion in Macedonia.

The feeling against Greece must always be one of dislike and contempt. It was somewhat aroused during the period of elections, in which Greek subjects were inclined to participate, and it was further intensified by the Cretan declaration of annexation to Greece. The general feeling in this connection would appear to be that Turkey would sooner risk a war than submit to such an indignity.

Generally speaking, the Young Turkey party may be said to have no distinct foreign policy, but to try to be well with all, though disinclined to tolerate any further loss of territory. Overtures made by Servia and Montenegro towards understandings have been not unwisely, but politely declined, and the predominating conviction appears rather to be that it is above all necessary for them to put their house in order before embarking on any fixed foreign policy. . . .

With regard to Crete, the attitude of the Turkish Government was quite clear. Their hands were absolutely full with the Balkan question, and they stated that they had been willing to intrust their interests in the island to the four Protecting Powers who were guarantees for those interests. They trusted implicitly to those Powers to hold it for them in accordance with the Agreement they had made. But public opinion made itself felt in a most unambiguous way, that, whatever might be the course of events in the Balkans, they certainly would not accede to the annexation of Crete to Greece.⁽⁹⁾

The Ottoman Ministry in January 1909, and other leading Turkish Politicians.

Kiamil Pasha (Grand Vizier) was appointed Grand Vizier on the 5th August, 1908, for the third time, his longest tenure of office having been the six years between 1885 and 1891, when Sir William White was Ambassador at Constantinople. His Highness,

⁽⁹⁾ [A section on the Turco-Persian Frontier is omitted here.]

who is a native of Cyprus, admits his age to be 77, but it is almost certain that he is well over 80.

Some fifty years ago he went to England, where he began to study English and conceived a liking and admiration for the country and its institutions, which has gained him the reputation of being a pronounced Anglophil. He subsequently resided in Egypt some seven years in the service of the Khedive, Abbas Pasha, and then came to Constantinople with his son, Ilhami Pasha. He entered the Turkish Government service, being appointed Mutessarif of Jerusalem more than once, and Vali of Aleppo, where he had a serious difference with the British Consul, Mr. Henderson, as a result and solution of which both Vali and Consul were removed. He was made Minister of Eveaf in 1880 and Grand Vizier in 1885, when Bulgaria suddenly annexed Eastern Roumelia. During this term of office he endeavoured to solve the Egyptian question on the lines of the Drummond Wolff Convention. The general trend of his policy was, like that of England, a leaning towards the Triple Alliance and profound mistrust of Russia. In 1895, during the period of the Armenian massacres, and immediately after that which took place in the capital, he was again called to power, and by a series of wise and energetic measures rapidly brought about a lull in the then troubled situation, but was dismissed within a month owing to his insistence on radical reforms throughout the Empire. He was shortly afterwards abruptly despatched in a Government boat to Smyrna as Vali, where he remained in semi-exile and closely watched by Palace spies until 1906. Owing to the denunciations to the Sultan, which were generally supposed to have been connived at, if not encouraged by his rival, the ex-Grand Vizier, Ferid Pasha, to the effect that Kiamil Pasha was intriguing with a foreign Power with the design of overthrowing the Sultan's direct authority and creating in the Smyrna district, a privileged province on Egyptian lines, he was suddenly ordered to proceed to Rhodes. Having suspicions that he might be made away with before he reached that island, he took refuge in the British Consulate, which he only left after obtaining a guarantee from the Sultan that he would be allowed to reside quietly at Constantinople and not be forced to accept a provincial post. He took opportunities of explaining to the Sultan the nature of the intrigues of which he had been a victim, and on the dismissal of Ferid Pasha before the regrant of the Constitution in July last was made Minister without portfolio in the Cabinet of Kuchuk Saïd Pasha, to whom he was a sort of coadjutor in the Grand Vizierate. Some twelve days after, on the 5th August, Saïd Pasha, being unable to "ride the whirlwind" of disorder and chaos then prevailing, resigned and succeeded by Kiamil. For the last five months, during which the country has still been passing through the throes of a revolution, he has managed, despite external complications in the Balkans and Crete, skilfully to guide the destinies of his country, until with the successful opening of Parliament a comparatively settled order of things may be said to have been established.

Kiamil Pasha speaks French and English fairly well, while, in addition to Turkish, he has a fluent knowledge of modern Greek and Arabic. Despite his advanced age he is a man of great activity and powers of work, possesses a cool judgment and is full of resources, especially in matters of internal administration. He is distinctly reticent, carries himself with a quiet dignity and inspires confidence to a degree that is rare in the case of Oriental officials. He has considerable determination of character, bordering perhaps on obstinacy, and has distinctly been an element of stability in the recent stormy convulsions through which the Empire has been passing.

Sheikh-ul-Islam.—*Vide* Annual Report for 1906.⁽¹⁰⁾

Tewfik Pasha (Minister for Foreign Affairs).—See Annual Report for 1906 *supra*.⁽¹¹⁾

Gabriel Effendi (Minister of Public Works).—*Vide* Annual Report for 1906, p. 31.⁽¹²⁾

Hassan Fehmi Pasha (President of the Council of State).—*Vide* Annual Report of 1906.⁽¹³⁾

⁽¹⁰⁾ [*r. supra*, p. 14.]

⁽¹²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 13-14.]

⁽¹¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 11.]

⁽¹³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 16.]

Refik Bey (Minister of Justice) is a Turk from the Broussa district, who made his reputation as a successful lawyer. He is a man of Liberal views, and has long been associated with the work of the Young Turks, at whose suggestion he was recently appointed Minister of Justice.

Hussein Hilmi Pasha (Minister of the Interior) is a Turk born at Mitylene, who has become well known to the outside world as Inspector-General of Macedonia during recent years. In addition to Turkish, he speaks Arabic, Greek, and French with a certain fluency, and is about 55 years of age. He first made his reputation and became known to the Sultan some fifteen years ago, when as Mutessarif of Kerak (Maán) on the line of the Hejaz Railway he reclaimed both the district and its nomad inhabitants. He was subsequently appointed Vali of Adana, but was dismissed at the instance of the Austrian Government for his arbitrary imprisonment of the local Austrian postmaster. He was shortly afterwards made Vali of Yemen, a post which he held for some seven years. Partly under instructions from the Palace and partly on his own initiative, he introduced reforms of a strenuous nature, which led to considerable friction with the native Arabs, and eventually to an attack on his life. It was during his term of office there and mainly at his instigation that the series of encroachments on the Aden Protectorate, which led to the Addarega incident and the subsequent delimitation, were begun. He is a man of determination, an indefatigable worker, and of great personal ambition concealed by a suave manner. He has been for so many years the pliant instrument of the old Palace régime that he is not quite trusted by the Young Turk Committee. He is reported, however, to have given them satisfactory assurances before being appointed Minister of the Interior, and he is at present the most likely candidate as Kiamil Pasha's successor in the Grand Vizierate.

Ali Jevad Bey (the Sultan's First Secretary).—He is a man of over 50, was at one time employed in the Tobacco Régie Company, has a certain knowledge of French, and has for some twenty years been one of the principal Private Secretaries of the Sultan. He is reputed never to have mixed in Palace intrigue, to have liberal views, and to be honest in money matters, but to some gives the impression of not being quite reliable, despite a certain bluntness of manner. He has a most difficult rôle to play as the official channel of communication between the outside world and his profoundly mistrusted Imperial master. He has so far acquitted himself well, especially in the matter of the Sultan's speech at the opening of the Chamber of Deputies and at the recent Deputies' banquet at the Palace. He professes his object to be to restore confidence between the Sovereign and his people, and declares he will resign should he fail in his task. He is a Mahomedan theologian and a man of professedly independent though moderate means.

Arif Pasha (Minister of Marine).—He is the son of Atesh Mehmed Pasha who was Minister of Marine after the Crimean War when English officers and artisans reorganized the Turkish navy. He has had practically no seafaring experience beyond a trip to Bombay and the Persian Gulf in a training ship some twenty-five years ago, and owes his appointment to the fact that even in the days of despotism he gave open expression to his liberal views, suffered in consequence and, at the moment of the revival of the Constitution in July last, was mainly instrumental in compelling the navy to at once espouse the cause of the people *versus* the Palace. He is thoroughly honest and well-intentioned, and has strong pro-English proclivities. He speaks no European language.

General Riza Pasha (Minister of War).—Is over 50, spent three years studying in Germany. He was Vali of Monastir in 1903 when the Russian Consul was murdered by a sentry and was removed on the demand of the Russian Embassy. He was then given a high command in Yemen at the time of the Arab revolt there. He deprecated a frontal attack policy declaring that with Syrian Arab troops and a generally inadequate military equipment, he would be only courting disaster. He was, however, over-ruled by the Palace, but his forecast was borne out by the half-hearted way in which the Syrian troops fought against the local Arabs and by the series of disasters which eventually compelled him to surrender Sanaá to the Imam's levies. He was

disgraced for capitulating, but was subsequently made Director of the Hejaz Railway at the Medina end, and at the time of the revolution was appointed Commander of the IInd Army Corps whose headquarters are at Adrianople. On the sudden demise of the popular War Minister Regib Pasha, Ali Riza was chosen as his successor and has given general satisfaction under the trying conditions between the revolution in July last and the end of the year. He has shown great activity in his new post and is largely responsible for the great recent improvement in the Turkish army as a fighting machine. He is intelligent, quick, and pleasant of manner, and speaks French and German fairly well.

Shemséddin Bey (Minister of Evcaf).—Shemséddin Bey is of Circassian origin, aged about 50 and of cultivated literary tastes, being also well versed in Arabic and Persian. He was many years ago Assistant Under-Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, and for a short period Vali of Van. Some twelve years ago he was made Ottoman Ambassador at Tehran where he was on friendly, if not familiar terms with the prominent Mujtahids. Especially those who affected the doctrines of Safism. His policy in Persia, probably at the prompting of Sultan Abdul Hamid was to impress on the Persian religious Chiefs the absence of any irreconcilability between the Shiah and Sunni religions. It was Pan-Islamic in its ultimate object and he had a certain success in toning down the sharp religious dividing line between the two divisions of Islam. Last year when despotism still reigned in Turkey and when the foreign Representatives at Tehran were pressing Constitutionalism on the Shah. [*sic*] Shemséddin Bey took part in some of these latter representations with the result that he was at once recalled by Abdul Hamid and, shortly after the proclamation of the Constitution in Turkey was appointed by the Liberals to his present post. He has few positive sides to his character and is not likely, in the ordinary course, to long remain Minister of Evcaf.

Raif Pasha (Director of Customs).—Raif Pasha in a way is one of the most interesting figures in present Turkish officialdom. He is over 70 years of age and of Albanian origin, his grandfather having accompanied the Albanian Mehmet Ali Pasha to Egypt, and his father having held the post of Head of the Customs in Crete when the latter island was subdued by Ibrahim Pasha of Egypt. He was early in life attached to Midhat Pasha when the latter was Vali of Bulgaria, then known as the "Vilayet of Danube," and became his confidential secretary. He accompanied Midhat Pasha to Bagdad when the latter was made Vali of that province and was subsequently Mutessarif of Beirout. He was subsequently made Minister of Public Works, an appointment which was interpreted by some as an indication that he had not been absolutely faithful to Midhat Pasha at the time of the latter's disgrace, exile, and death. This assumption is, however, probably quite baseless. Raif Pasha was then made Director-General of the Customs and was unceremoniously shipped off in semi-exile to Aleppo for obstinately refusing to obey the Palace behest to "cook his accounts" at the Customs. He arrived at Aleppo at the moment of general disorder succeeding the Armenian massacres, but in a short time succeeded in restoring tranquillity and confidence in his province which he governed well for some six years. He was dismissed for refusing to comply with Palace instructions and remained for some years without employ and as a "suspect" under the old régime. About a year ago, however, he was again appointed Director-General of Customs, but has within the last few months twice tendered his resignation and only consented to remain on at the special request of the Grand Vizier. He is a man of great independence of character, clear-headed, and of business aptitude uncommon among Turks.

Fethi Bey (Under Secretary at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs).—He is a Syrian Catholic and about 50 years of age, is the brother of Yusuf Pasha, Governor of the Lebanon and brother-in-law of Naoum Pasha, Ottoman Ambassador in Paris. His career has been spent in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and in Consular posts. He is intelligent, and is well versed in the routine of his Ministry, while possessing a good written and spoken knowledge of French.

Kuchuk Said Pasha (President of the Senate).—He is small of stature whence his

nickname of "Kuchuk" or "Short" Said Pasha and is a genuine Turk of Erzeroum, where he was born some seventy odd years ago. He enjoys the distinction of having been Grand Vizier seven times during the present reign of over thirty-eight years. With the exception, however, of his three years' tenure of that office between 1882-1885, he has only held the post for a couple of months or less at a time, and may be called Abdul Hamid's "stopgap" Grand Vizier. For a pure Turk, he may be said to be enlightened, and would, perhaps, have been an excellent Grand Vizier had Turkey been cut off from contact with, or pressure from European States. The Sultan has as a rule used him to tide over any crisis when the mass of Turkish feeling has been aroused and his genuine Turkish nationality has, perhaps, well fitted him for such a purpose. From a Western point of view, he is distinctly slow and even retrograde in his tendencies. He enjoys, moreover, the unenviable distinction of having been the first of the Sultan's first Secretaries at the Palace and to have thus, in a way, inaugurated the régime of Palace despotism. He had not, however, always been accommodating to the ways of the Sultan and in the time of the then Sir Philip Currie he had to take refuge in the British Embassy from Palace persecution. He left the Embassy under a guarantee from the Sultan that he would be allowed to reside unmolested in the capital and would not be forced to accept office. This undertaking was faithfully observed by the Sultan, though Said Pasha was closely watched by spies at his house near Pera.

Some Notes on prominent Members of the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies.

Ahmed Riza Bey (President of the Chamber of Deputies).—He is the son of a certain "Ingliz Ali Bey," Aide-de-camp to Sultan Abdul Aziz, who was attached to the Shah of Persia, Nasreddin, when the latter visited Bagdad and the Shiah shrines at Kerbela and Negef. Ali Bey, after the demise of Sultan Abdul Aziz, was sent into exile at Antalia on the south coast of Asia Minor. His wife was of Hungarian extraction. The son, Ahmed Riza, entered the Ministry of Public Instruction and eventually became representative of that Department at Broussa. He provoked the displeasure of the Palace by writing a treatise advocating liberal courses of studies in the school, and some twenty years ago fled to Paris, where he edited the "Meshseret." Though poor and struggling to eke out an existence he was proof against the various attempts of the Palace, through the Ottoman Ambassador in Paris, to buy off his opposition to the Hamidian régime. He is a man of sterling honesty and singleness of purpose, but many doubt whether he has the qualities required for managing the Ottoman Parliament, composed as it is of such diversified elements.

Mehmet Talat Bey (First Vice-President) is a man of under 40, and a Turk from the Roumelian provinces, speaking Greek and Bulgarian. He is a man of great, though quiet, physical and mental energy, and was the Secretary in Turkey of the Committee of Union and Progress, whose nominee he is in the Vice-Presidency.

Aristidi Pasha (Second Vice-President).—It was considered expedient that one of the Vice-Presidents should be a Christian, and Aristidi Pasha was chosen owing to his experience, conciliatory character, and legal training. He is a Greek who made his career in the Ministry of Justice, and was for some years Assistant Vali of Sivas.

Ismail Kemal Bey (Deputy for Berat, Albania). He is, perhaps, the most prominent Member of the Parliament, where he is likely to play a considerable rôle if he does not get a post in the Ministry. He is an Albanian, is now close on 60 years of age, and has just returned from some ten years' wandering in Europe. Many years ago, when Member of the Council of State, he fell into disfavour by writing repeated reports to the Sultan pointing out that the Palace régime was fast ruining the Empire, which could only, he maintained, be saved by a return to constitutional methods. The Sultan to get rid of him appointed him Vali of Tripoli in Barbary, and announced his intention of sending him there in a Government ship. Ismail Kemal Bey, hearing that the intention was to make away with him before he reached

his post of exile, took refuge with his two sons on board the British Embassy "stationnaire," whence he was transferred to a foreign steamer and effected his escape. He has the Albanian intelligence and force of character, speaks French well, and ought, in the ordinary course, to render great services to his country under a Liberal régime. He has practically no private means, and is reproached by his enemies with a certain tendency to looseness in money matters.

Rahmi Bey (Deputy for Salonica) is about 35 years of age—the son of Hepzi Bey, a considerable land proprietor of Salonica, and one of the moving spirits in the Committee of Union and Progress, having been for a time President of the Head Centre at Salonica. He is a man of considerable eloquence, energy, intelligence, and determination, a strong Turkish Nationalist and a deadly opponent of the Palace, if not, indeed, of the present Sultan. He acquired notoriety recently by going to the Palace and demanding the dismissal of the Grand Vizier, Kiamil Pasha, who had declined to fit in with the arrangements made by Rahmi Bey and the Committee of Union and Progress for the entertainment of the Balkan Committee Deputation during the visit of the latter to Constantinople. He is one of the leading spirits in the so-called Union and Progress party in the new Ottoman Parliament, and is reported to be an aspirant to the Ministry of the Interior in the event of the present Cabinet being overthrown.

Javid Bey (Deputy for Salonica).—He is a native of Salonica, of Jewish origin, and was Director of the Salonica School of Arts and Crafts. He is a writer, poet, and man of considerable eloquence and intellectual ability, and also is reputed to be the only Young Turk possessing a competent technical knowledge of economic and financial questions. On the latter he is "the authority" in the Ottoman Chamber of Deputies.

Emmanuel Carassa (Deputy for Salonica).—He is a Jew, and a lawyer by profession, and a man of considerable intellectual capacity and determination of character. He has been the "brains" and "Ulysses" of the Salonica branch of the Committee of Union and Progress.

Hussein Jahid (Deputy for Constantinople).—He was director of a school under the old régime and editor of the "Tanin" newspaper under the new. He is an able writer of the Labouchère type, and achieved notoriety by his attacks on the Kiamil Pasha Ministry before and immediately after the opening of Parliament. He suffered an eclipse as the result of Kiamil Pasha's unanimous vote of confidence, but is still on many occasions the spokesman of the party of the Committee of Union and Progress.

Halijian Effendi (Deputy for Constantinople).—He is a well-educated Armenian, speaking French and English in addition to Armenian and Turkish, and was formerly legal adviser to the Public Debt Administration. He is a man of moderate views, and professedly desirous of working in harmony with the Turks, having been elected under the auspices of the Committee of Union and Progress.

Zohrab Effendi (Deputy for Constantinople).—He is an Armenian and a lawyer of considerable reputation, who in the past was a suspect owing to his connection with Armenian "revolutionaries." He possesses great fluency of speech and readiness of repartee, being consequently reckoned a useful member in a debate.

Cosmidi Effendi (Deputy for Constantinople).—He is a Greek from the Anatolian provinces and a lawyer by profession, a man of moderate views and a good spokesman of the Greek Deputies, his Turkish being exceptionally good for a Greek.

Dr. Riza Tefrik (Deputy for Constantinople).—He is a doctor by profession, and was well known under the old régime for his liberal views. He is a Freemason and a Pantheist, being also nicknamed the "Philosopher." He speaks French, Greek, English, and some German, besides his mother-tongue, Turkish. He is a fluent and pleasant speaker, and is a well-known figure in the "House," where his rôle is chiefly that of throwing oil on the troubled waters of racial or religious tendencies to dissension.

Suleiman Bostani (Deputy for Beirout).—He is the only Christian Arab Deputy, and is a man of considerable learning and breadth of view, speaking French and English fairly fluently in addition to Turkish and his Arabic native tongue. He is the author of several works in Arabic, including a translation of Homer into that tongue. His rendering of the *Odyssey* is reported to be exceptionally good, and to rival Butcher and Lang's English translation of the same work.

Shefik Bey el Muayyad (Deputy for Damascus).—He is the leader in the Chamber of the some seventy odd Arab Deputies, being a member of one of the oldest Arab families of Damascus, into which the notorious Izzet Pasha, late Second Secretary of the Sultan, married. He was for years translator at the Palace, and speaks French and English fairly well.

Hoja Mustapha Asim (Deputy for Constantinople).—He is, perhaps, the most prominent of the seventy turbaned Members of the Ottoman Parliament, being a man of enlightened and liberal views and a good speaker, with a pleasing voice and delivery.

Parliamentary Elections.

The Electoral Law lays down that the lists of electors are to be prepared every May, and that the representatives are to reach Constantinople by the end of October (o.s.); the Constitution, however, was only an accomplished fact at the end of July, and the elections had to be hurried on very rapidly, and, as it was, when Parliament finally met on the 17th December, over a month late, many Members had not yet arrived. It is therefore not surprising, especially in view of the inexperience of a large number of the officials, many of whom had come in with the new régime, and the absence of any useful precedent, that many irregularities were committed. It was also to be expected that these irregularities would tend to be at the expense of the Christians, and especially the Bulgarians in Macedonia, owing to the declaration of Bulgarian independence. The Turkish authorities have been accused by both Bulgarians and Greeks of an almost diabolical ingenuity in making up the "electoral colleges" in such a manner that an absolute Greek or Bulgarian majority in some district should be outvoted by the Mussulman minority; complaints were also rife, especially among the Greeks of Constantinople, that they were illegally prevented from voting, and at one time it looked as if their dissatisfaction in the city would cause a serious breach of the peace; however, the firm attitude of the Government, the unsympathetic attitude of the European element generally, and the refusal of the foreign Representatives to intervene in the matter at the request of the Greek Minister, eventually led the Greeks to abandon the intention which they had announced of taking no part in the elections, and to accept the terms offered by the Committee of Union and Progress, under which two Greek Members were to be returned for the capital. An arrangement such as the one alluded to was common in most of Macedonia and in towns like Smyrna, where there is a large Christian element. On the whole, it must be admitted that the Young Turks adhered very fairly to any arrangements into which they had entered for a proportional representation, even after they had managed to secure an undue representation at the primary elections. One reason why the Christians failed to secure a larger representation, apart from the illegalities committed by the authorities, is that it had been a not uncommon practice among them only to register one male in each family, so as to decrease the burden of the military exemption tax; while another cause of their failure was the mutual antipathy of Bulgar for Greek and Greek for Armenian. It may be said that, however obtained, the results of the elections are distinctly satisfactory; if the elections have, especially in the more remote districts of the Empire, sometimes been rather a farce, good representative men have for the most part been selected, but it is, of course, too early to form any opinion as to the line which Parliament will take. Of the Christian elements, the one that has gained most in prestige during the elections is undoubtedly the Armenian; the great majority of them have wisely abstained from voicing the aspirations of the Tashnak

society for an independent or autonomous Armenia, and they have realized how much they have to gain from a whole-hearted support of the reformed Government, and by moderating their demands for immediate and absolute equality with the Turks. Unlike the Greeks, who suffered perhaps least under the old régime, their religious privileges had been to a great extent rescinded, while under the new régime their superiority in the Turkish language will give them an advantage over their Christian rivals, a fact which the Greeks very probably realize, and which may have contributed to their half-hearted reception of the Constitution.

Seeing that modifications of the Electoral Law are expected to be submitted to Parliament shortly, it is not necessary to give details of its provisions further than to state that the elections are conducted in two degrees, that all taxpayers over 25 years of age, with the exception of private soldiers actually serving with the colours and persons suffering from various disabilities, are electors of the first degree, and that in each administrative district 250 to 750 electors are represented by one elector of the second degree, who finally elect the representatives of the sanjak, which is the electoral unit, one Member being returned by 100 to 300 secondary electors, two Members by 300 to 600, and so on.

In another part of the Report will be found an account of the opening of Parliament by the Sultan, and some details of the careers and characters of a number of the leading Members.

Finance.

In his Report for last year Sir N. O'Connor wrote that "no estimates are published by the Ottoman Government and it is impossible to give exact figures." I can only repeat this statement.

During the whole of the past year down to the 31st December the Government had, as usual, lived from hand to mouth, and the introduction of the Constitution has so far not had the time to produce any good result.

While the Budget of 1322 (1906-7) showed a deficit of £T. 590,000 (which undoubtedly was a gross under-statement), no Budget for 1323 ever appeared.

Loans made for carrying on the Government between 1902 and 1906 amounted to £T. 12,000,000 (exclusive of the Bagdad Railway Loan for £T. 2,000,000), and in 1907 small loans were made amounting to, in the aggregate, £T. 2,000,000.

In 1908 loans were made of £T. 100,000 in June, £T. 95,000 in July, £T. 300,000 in August from the Ottoman Bank (secured on the customs and on the "new revenues" of the Debt), as well as £T. 150,000 from the "Régie," secured on the Government's share of the profits, on which there was already a lien of £T. 40,000 from a debt contracted in the preceding year.

In September a contract was concluded with the Ottoman Bank for a loan of £T. 4,700,000 nominal, or about £T. 4,000,000 actual, the price being 85, at 4 per cent., guaranteed on the customs and the "contributions indirectes." An immediate loan of part of this was made by the bank in the form of their handing over the Government cover for current account, representing about £T. 900,000 in cash. The contract is subject to its approval by Parliament and its subsequent acceptance by the bank. But meanwhile the needs of the Government again became pressing. The Porte requested the assistance of His Majesty's Government in obtaining the conversion of the loans guaranteed upon the tribute of Egypt and Cyprus. Though anxious to assist the new reformed Government, His Majesty's Government were obliged to reply that such schemes had been considered in the past, when conditions were favourable to them, but at no time had conditions been so unfavourable as at the present. They added that in **any** transaction affecting the Cyprus tribute they must pay great regard to the objections of the people of Cyprus to the continuance of that impost.

Failing to obtain help in this direction the Ottoman Government found themselves driven to obtain a new loan, and this they succeeded in doing by getting an advance on the September contract to the amount of £T. 1,500,000, divided equally between British, French, and German capitalists, at the rate of 7 per cent. They gave the same

securities as for the September loan, and undertook to repay the advance upon the acceptance of this contract or else upon the first financial operation they might conclude. By these means they succeeded in making the two ends meet up to the end of the year.

The services of an eminent French authority as Financial Adviser were secured by the reformed Government, and M. Laurent arrived in Constantinople in December with the purpose of clearing up the confusion caused by many years' neglect of Turkish finance and of drawing up a statement of the facts and a Budget. One of the principal aims to which he set himself at once was to obtain a fairly accurate estimate of the Floating Debt.

It appears absolutely useless to endeavour to give even a vague account of Turkish finance under present circumstances; it is as if one should seek to give the true bearings of a ship without possessing either a compass, a chronometer, or a sextant. There exist, so far, no facts on which to go, and though much pains and talent have been employed in making estimates, yet the results are not very much more than conjectures, or at the best approximations.

As M. Laurent is now being supplied with all the materials he calls for for the purpose of making an accurate survey of the situation, it will be preferable to await the appearance of his Report rather than to give a mass of figures which can only be misleading.

The Ottoman Army.

The past year has affected no department of the State more markedly than the army. The changes which have been wrought by it and in it have been of the greatest consequence, and may be expected to bear fruit in the future.

The revolution of July, by means of which an almost absolute Monarch has been reduced to the status of little more than a puppet Ruler and the gang of Palace favourites put to flight or brought to justice, was the work in a very great measure of the army, and notably that of the officers of the III Ordu, supported by their comrades of the II Ordu.

With the new régime came a clean sweep of the old War Office gang and army corps Commanders, whilst an efficient and hardworking War Minister and General Staff have replaced the old corrupt and effete administration.

The new Ordu District Commanders are all capable men, determined to work for their country, and their honesty has at any rate up to now been unimpeached.

The old clumsy administration of the Grand Master of the Artillery has been remodelled, and the fighting units which were formerly under his orders have been transferred to those of the Minister of War, and the "Topkhané naziri," as the Grand Master is now termed, takes instructions from the Minister of War.

The quick-firing Krupp field artillery guns have been issued principally to the Ordus in European Turkey, and artillery and musketry practice, which has till this year been absolutely neglected, if not forbidden, is now carried out under proper regulations.

Improvement in discipline is also everywhere to be noticed, though there is still room, according to our ideas, for much more in this respect.

New rates of pay for officers have been approved of, and as for some months officers have received the same, much existing discontent has been checked.

Artillery practice with the guns in the Bosphorus and Dardanelles defences has been carried out with surprisingly good results, and it is safe to say that both these waterways are impassable by a fleet in the daytime without incurring serious loss.

Mine-fields are being obtained, and it is reasonable to suppose that when these are placed the passage of the straits will be precluded.

Large orders for ammunition of all sorts have been placed abroad, and saddles, together with other cavalry and engineer equipment, are being purchased steadily.

An augmentation of the I Ordu has taken place, eleven new battalions having been formed in the capital, whilst additional transport battalions, engineer battalions, and

machine-gun companies are being rapidly brought into existence, and it is even now proposed to form a new 3rd Division in the I Ordu.

The artillery organization is in process of remodelling—mountain batteries being generally grouped independently by battalions, and four new field artillery regiments are being raised at Adrianople to work the old but still efficient guns which have been placed in the defences there.

Tactical field days are very generally held, and officers and soldiers alike welcome them as a satisfactory and interesting change from the old enforced inaction.

An important change has been made in the Redif organization—Nizam Divisions 22, 23, and the 47th Brigade of the III Ordu—after about a year's service as such having reverted to 1st class Redifs.

Moreover, the whole of the 2nd class Redif organization in Asia has been abolished as such, the men being now held to belong to the 1st class Redif formations and liable to be called up as required.

An exception, however, is to be noted in the case of the 2nd class Redif Division of Kalé Sultanie which has been transformed into the 5th Division of 1st class Redif, which latter formation now exists as the 21st Nizam Division.

During the year that has passed the equipment of the first five Ordus with the small bore Mauser rifle has been completed, and the weapons have been issued to both Nizam and Redif units.

The VI and VII Ordus, as well as the two independent divisions of the Hedjaz, are now armed with the large bore Mauser instead of the Martini-Henry or Martini-Peabody.

Incompetent officers and those suspected of spying receive little consideration; only some two months since, Prince Aziz Hassan, who is Inspector of the II Ordu cavalry, summarily dismissed from the service in one day seven squadron leaders for incompetence and undesirability.

Not only have new Commanders been appointed to the Ordus, but a general and most beneficial change has been effected in the staff and the higher ranks.

Two of the German instructors have quitted the army, viz., Fleischer and Auler Pasha, and have not been replaced.

Renaud ambulance trains and armoured automobiles have been purchased, and also portable searchlights for garrison and field purposes.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The remainder of this section of the report is omitted as being extremely technical, though the following may be quoted :

“ Though at the end of the year the forces which had in the autumn been under arms had been largely reduced, it is no exaggeration to say that there were no less than 220,000 regular soldiers under arms in Turkey in Europe, well armed, and fairly disciplined and officered, all animated with patriotism largely born of the Constitution, and eager to fight should war be thrust upon their country.”]

Navy.

During the first half of the year there was no change to chronicle in the condition of the Turkish navy.

On the new Constitution being granted, it was decided that the navy should be reorganized and made efficient.

Previously the Navy Department had been a hotbed of bribery and corruption; the consequence being that the dockyard was in a deplorable condition, and incapable of effecting any but the smallest of repairs, the fleet consisted chiefly of obsolete and useless vessels, and the officers and men had received practically no sea training.

Vice-Admiral Arif Pasha was appointed Minister of Marine, and the following steps have been taken to remedy the state of the navy :—

- (a.) The British Admiralty were approached with a request that an officer of some standing should be lent to the Turkish Government to advise the

Minister of Marine as to the statement he is to lay before Parliament on the Budget, and to initiate a scheme of reforms.

- (b.) The King's Regulations and Admiralty Instructions are being translated into Turkish, the portions dealing with religious subjects being altered as necessary.
- (c.) The obsolete vessels which had been lying at the Dardanelles and elsewhere have been collected at the Golden Horn and offered for sale by treaty.
- (d.) The latest ships, which possess a certain amount of fighting value, have had their crews completed and have undergone training, a certain amount of target practice having been carried out, and the ships sent on cruises. At present there is a squadron consisting of two cruisers, second class, the "Abdul Medjid" and "Abdul Hamid," two torpedo gun-boats, and one of two large destroyers, built in France, and delivered in 1908, cruising in the Ægean Sea. These destroyers are called the "Samsoun" and the "Basra."

Two gun-boats have also been dispatched to the Persian Gulf for excise duties on the rivers.

With reference to (a), Rear-Admiral Gamble has been lent to the Turkish Government for a period of three years and will arrive in Constantinople early in February.

With regard to (c), sixty-three obsolete vessels are to be put up to sale by auction shortly, it having been apparently impossible to sell them by private treaty.

The ships remaining which are of any practical value consist of five battle-ships, the "Messudiyeh," "Feth-i-Bulend," "Avni-illah," "Muyini-Zaffer," and "Assar-i-Tewfik," two second-class cruisers, the "Abdul Medjid" and "Abdul Hamid," two torpedo gun-boats, six destroyers, and thirty-two first-class torpedo-boats.

It has been proposed to remodel the uniform of the men, conforming closely to that used in the British navy, and samples of material, &c., have been obtained, but no change is apparent at present.

One of the chief obstacles to reform in the navy is the enormous number of officers which exist, there being no fewer than 7,500, whilst the fleet requires considerably less than half that number.

The question of pensioning off or otherwise reducing the number to what is required will have to be faced, and as a large majority of the younger officers were supporters of the Young Turks party, considerable difficulty is certain to be encountered.

There is a deal of keenness amongst the junior officers, who are great admirers of the English navy; they have started a club, where lessons in English are given.

On the invitation of the United States' Government, ten officers, consisting of one Captain, two Commanders, three Lieutenants, one Midshipman, and three Engineers, have joined the United States' squadron at Smyrna and will accompany it on its return voyage to the United States.

It is improbable that money will be forthcoming for the new construction for some years to come, but when such construction is decided upon, it is probable that the work will be intrusted to English firms, as the authorities are of opinion that the workmanship turned out is of better quality and more lasting than that of foreign firms.

Railways.

The only active railway building in Turkey during the past year has been on the Hejaz line, which was completed and ceremoniously opened on the 1st September, as far as Medina, a distance of 1,300 kiloms. from Damascus. The work was carried on from both ends. It was subject to sundry Bedouin raids during the year, but these were suppressed. It is proposed to continue it to Rabigh on the sea, where there is a good harbour, and where a considerable amount of material has already been landed, and thence to Mecca. This route is easier, safer, and better watered than the direct line between Medina and Mecca.

The line is no more under an independent Ministry, but is attached to the Grand Vizierate. Subscriptions no longer are as abundant as they were in the days when Izzet Pasha and the Palace were its presiding Genii.

Suggestions have been made for a branch line from Maan to Akabah, and also for a line from Sana in the Yemen to the Red Sea at Hodeidah.

In Turkey in Europe a sensation was caused early in the year by the unexpected issue of an *Irade* sanctioning the examination of a project for continuing the Bosnian Railway from Uvac through the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar to join the Oriental Railway at Mitrovitza, and for making the preliminary surveys. This work was concluded in the course of the year. There is little doubt that this Concession was made by the Sultan in return for the Austrian Government relaxing their assistance to the other Powers in pressing the scheme for judicial reforms in Macedonia. It aroused a great deal of Russian and some Italian indignation. The Russian Government at once answered by pressing the Servian request for a line from Mrdare, on the Servian frontier, via Pristina and Prizrend to the Adriatic at San Giovanni di Medua, the idea being that it should be eventually continued across Servia, and join the Danube at Negotin where is its confluence with the Timok. They obtained the support of the other Embassies, but His Majesty's Embassy held aloof, saying that Macedonian reform and not railways should be pressed forward. This line, if ever made, will be costly and difficult, and little remunerative.

The Bulgarians were considering their plan for joining up the Bulgarian line at Kustendil with the Turkish line at Kumanovo, but took no active measures.

The Greek Minister has been endeavouring to enlist sympathies for the projected Larissa-Salonica Railway, and his representations have been received in a friendly spirit though no decision has yet been taken.

All these plans were cut short by the introduction of the Constitution, and they will doubtless be henceforth handled in a very different way by the Department of Public Works than they were by the Palace.

An English Syndicate is contemplating the construction of a line from Alexandretta to Aleppo, hoping to get the better of the Bagdad Railway, which has an option on branches to the sea between Mersina and Tripoli, by offering to build it without a guarantee on terms of which the Bagdad Railway might be unwilling to work, and an American Syndicate has also put in a request for this Concession.

An interest is being shown in certain British circles as to the possibility of constructing a line to the east of the Tigris probably from Bagdad to Khanikin, as this is not engrossed by the Bagdad scheme.

There is a third British scheme afloat for the construction of a line from Tripoli to Homs, in Syria, but this is still in a nebulous state.

The Bagdad Railway has made no further progress in construction, and its terminus is still Boulgourlou. But it has made another prodigious stride in the way of agreements, a fresh Convention having been signed with the Turkish Government on the 2nd June, for the construction of two more sections, 840 kilom. in all, which will bring the line to Helif and Aleppo. The terms are, in the main, the same as in the original concession. The annuity for the first section is £T. 200,000 and for the second £T. 220,000, the bonds for the first of which only were to be handed over at once, but do not appear to have been yet issued. The guarantees provided by the Turkish Government are the surplus of the ceded (new) revenues of the Public Debt, after payment of certain outstanding loans "*à courte échéance*," the sheep taxes of Konia, Adana, and Alép̄o Vilayets, and the Government's share of profits on any part of the line. The period granted for the construction of these two sections is eight years.

The balance sheet for 1907 was only published in June.

The gross receipts were given as £T. 422,960. The kilometric guarantees paid by the Government were approximately £T. 200,000.

Reforms in Macedonia.

[These are omitted here, but extracts are reproduced *supra* pp. 230-1. No. 187.]

Events in Macedonia.

The first four months of the year 1908 showed very little variation in the matter of crime from those that immediately preceded them. The monthly average of violent deaths for January-April 1908 was 114, the total number recorded against Bulgarians and Greeks respectively being exactly the same, viz., 97 each. In May, the total rose to 167, and the Greek share to 47, that of the Bulgarians remaining at 24. In June, the Bulgarians actively retaliated, the number of murders recorded against them being 46, while the Greek total rose still further to 52. In the first 23 days of July, Greeks perpetrated 56 murders, and the Bulgars whose leaders seem to have been gifted with a more intelligent anticipation of coming events, only 18, the monthly totals being respectively 198 and 187.

The most noticeable individual outrages committed during this period were :—

1. The massacre of 26 Bulgars (5 men, 10 women, and 11 children) by Patriarchists at Dragosh, near Monastir, on the 8th January.
2. That of a woman and 4 men by a Greek band at Vishani (Castoria) on the 7th June.
3. The attack of a Greek band on the village of Pozhar (Karadjovo) on the 14th June, in which 14 Bulgarians lost their lives.
4. The shocking massacre of 24 Bulgarians and a Turkish woman by Patriarchists at Rubartzi, near Monastir, on the 18th July.
5. The murder of 4 shepherds and destruction of 3,180 sheep and goats by a Greek band at Ayi Yani, near Karaferia, on the 7th February.
6. The assassination of M. Askites, first Dragoman of the Hellenic Consulate-General on the 6th March.

The military force in Macedonia, having been depleted by the disbandment of the men of the 1318 levy in the autumn of 1907, was obviously incapable of coping with the task of preserving order, and recourse was had in the last month of the year to a fresh enrolment of reserves. During January and February 1908, upwards of 10,000 Anatolian Ihtiat and Redifs were shipped from Smyrna to Salonica, and incorporated in the battalions distributed over the interior, while at the same time the recruits of 1324 were hurried prematurely forward. The former, however, having been solemnly assured that the term of their service should not exceed two months, were not long in showing signs of impatience, rapidly ripening into insubordination, the first open evidence of which was the revolt of some 400 Redifs at Uskub, who occupied the telegraph office at that place on the 29th April. Previous to this outbreak indeed considerable loss had been inflicted on the criminal organisations. In January, 21 comitadjis were reported to have been killed or captured, and 4 surrendered; in February 46 were killed and 15 captured, several encounters, notably those at Ribnitza Tcham, near Petritch, on the 20th, at Beshishta, in Morihovo on the 22nd, and at Meshnitza in the Osmanie Kaza on the 28th, having been of a really serious character. In March, 17 comitadjis were killed and 9 captured, and almost as many in April, but the operations for the pursuit and repression of bands began to be disorganised in consequence of the spirit of discontent and insubordination which spread among the troops engaged. The revolt of the Uskub Redifs above alluded to resulted, after some ten days' negotiations, in the men receiving their pay and their discharge, the regulars of the 1319 levy, who had threatened to follow their example, being disbanded at the same time.

The success of their comrades at Uskub encouraged the reservists in other places to follow the same course. On the 16th May a number of men belonging to the "Tertib-i-Sani" called up in December took possession of the telegraph offices at

Florina and Sorovitch in the Vilayet of Monastir. They were joined by detachments from Neveska, Vostoran, and other neighbouring villages, and in due time they also received their discharge. In the first days of June some 80 reservists stationed at Resna took possession of a mosque, but, being unsupported, were overpowered by a body of cavalry despatched from Monastir. A fortnight later Monastir itself was the scene of a still more serious revolt, when upwards of 800 men of the infantry reserves went off duty and encamped behind the barracks. No result having attended this movement the mutineers, whose numbers had in the interval been increased by the accession of small contingents of reservists belonging to other arms to over 1,000 proceeded on the 27th June to take possession of the Government buildings, which they held until evening, when their discharges were duly handed to them. In consequence of this series of revolts a general disbandment of the reservists called out in December, and also of the Nizam of the 1819 levy was now decided on, and this reduction of the military force, coupled with the dispatch of two battalions to assist in suppressing the insurrectionary movement in the Island of Samos (28th May), led to a practical abandonment of all concerted operations for the suppression of bands in Macedonia.

In May, indeed, 15 comitadjis or brigands were killed and 8 captured, but this was the result of a series of trifling and mainly accidental encounters, several of which were with gendamerie patrols unsupported by troops, while in June and July the numbers fell to 7 killed and 3 captured, and 1 killed and 3 captured respectively.

Other events, however, were in progress which were destined to solve the band problem—at least temporarily—in quite a different fashion. On the evening of the 11th June there occurred an incident which may fairly be regarded as the first indication of the coming revolution. This was the attempt on the life of Nazim Bey, the “Commandant de Place,” or Head of the military police of Salonica. While half of Salonica society was gathered together in the public gardens, listening to an open-air concert which had been organized in favour of the Turkish schools, a man in the uniform of a Turkish officer entered the garden of Nazim Bey’s house, situated on the other side of the main road, and, passing his hand through the interstices of the wooden shutters of a small room in which that officer was sitting with his Adjutant, fired two shots from a revolver, which probably only a sudden and unexpected movement on the part of Nazim Bey prevented from proving fatal. The would-be assassin, pursued by Nazim’s orderly and another soldier, escaped in the direction of the Central Barracks, after mortally wounding one of his pursuers who attempted to close with him. This incident naturally created a considerable stir in Salonica, and the fact that the assailant, though universally believed to be an officer of the garrison succeeded in escaping identification, was the first sign which led outside observers to suspect the existence of a widespread and possibly dangerous conspiracy, involving the officers of the IIIrd Corps.

In order to explain this incident it is necessary to revert to another which occurred two months previously, and which, though it attracted little attention at the moment from the Europeans resident in Salonica, acquired significance in the light of after events. Early in February a young pupil of the Law School, which had been inaugurated here in the preceding December, wrote to a relative in Monastir to the effect that he had been sounded by comrades with a view to joining a Secret Society, membership of which involved the taking of an oath and the acceptance of prohibited literature. The relative, who happened to be a minor judicial functionary, submitted the letter to the Procureur, with the result that some ten pupils of the Law School and a similar number of subaltern officers of the IIIrd Army Corps were arrested and submitted to a lengthy interrogatory. The fact that all excepting one or two of the latter were released at the end of a few weeks was regarded here at the time as indicating the unimportant character of the alleged conspiracy: but in the light of later events it may be regarded as a proof of the careful nature of the precautions taken by the Committee of Union and Progress in the initiation of new members and the power which it had already acquired among the higher officials of the vilayet, many of whom

must have co-operated to quash the inquiry. It is not uninteresting to recall that the principal lecturer at the Salonica Law School at that moment was Maniassi-Zadé Refik Bey, the present Minister of Justice, who was at that time one of the most active and influential members of the Committee, to which also the Director of the School, Azmi Bey, and another of the lecturers, Mustapha Adil Bey, Director of the Import Section of the Custom-house, were at least affiliated. It is doubtless mainly to these circumstances that the immunity of the inculpated pupils of the school must be attributed. That the inquiry as regards the military officers arrested was somewhat more severe was due to Nazim Bey, who no doubt saw in it the chance of gaining personal distinction. He had already paid one visit to Constantinople to lay his views on the situation before the Palace, and was on the eve of returning again to the capital when the attempt above recorded was made to prevent him. He did, in fact, so proceed on the 12th June and was no more heard of at Salonica; but three or four days later a special Commission of Inquiry, composed of Ismail Mahir, Redjeb, and Yussouf Pashas, and other officers attached to the Palace, appeared on the scene, with instructions to institute a strict inquiry, and their arrival was the signal for action on the part of the Committee, which felt that it had no choice but to proceed at once to the execution of its plans or risk the loss of the fruits of three years' labours.

From this moment onwards events began to move with increasing rapidity. The first apparent result of the Commission of Inquiry was the recall of Essad Pasha who had acted as Commander-in-chief of the IIIrd Army Corps since the death of Khairi Pasha in July 1907, together with his Chief of the Staff, Ali Riza Pasha, who were held primarily responsible for the disaffection shown to exist in the corps. The former was replaced by Ibrahim Pasha, who had only a month previously vacated a divisional command at Serres in consequence of representations made by the Inspector-General at headquarters. Ibrahim Pasha had been regarded at Serres as reactionary and fanatical, but he had been only a few days here when he joined forces with Hilmi Pasha against the Commission of Inquiry, which was accordingly recalled to Constantinople in the first days of July. A few of its subordinate members, however, were left behind, with a view, no doubt, to the unostentatious prosecution of its inquiries. One of these, named Hakki Bey, was fired at and slightly wounded, his companion being somewhat more seriously so, on the evening of the 4th July by an emissary of the Committee of Union and Progress, who was arrested and dispatched to Constantinople. Another, named Sadik Pasha, was shot and seriously wounded on board the Messageries steamer "Sidon," by which he was returning to Constantinople, on the 12th July. The same steamer conveyed to Constantinople a regimental Imam from Monastir, who had also been shot, and, as it eventually proved, mortally wounded, at the door of a Salonica hotel two days previously, as he was leaving to report the result of his observations to the Palace.

In all the military revolts, previously mentioned in this Report, with the exception of the small abortive one at Resna in the first days of June, it had been remarked that the company officers appeared to be in sympathy with, if they were not actively aiding and abetting, their insubordinate men, and that even the higher military authorities here showed very little disposition to take active measures of repression against them. As the men, on the other hand, behaved with great moderation, and were guilty of no serious excesses or interference with the civil population, it may be said that their movement enjoyed almost universal sympathy and approval. It therefore caused less astonishment than might otherwise have been expected, when news was received that on the 3rd July, a Kol-aghasi, or Adjutant-Major, named Niazi Effendi, commanding a detachment of troops at Resna, accompanied by a Tahsildar, a few minor officials, and about 100 private soldiers and civilians, had seized the battalion chest, with all available arms, and raised the standard of rebellion in the mountains behind Monastir. He was joined by a similarly composed contingent from Nakoletz, the centre of the adjoining Nahié of Presba, and about the same time it became known that Staff-Major Enver Bey, who had mysteriously disappeared from Salonica a few days previously, and was popularly supposed to have escaped by sea to Greece, was at the head of

a body of deserters from the garrison of Tikvesh. On the receipt of this news at Constantinople, telegraphic instructions were dispatched to Shemsi Pasha, who was then in command of the troops at Uskub, to proceed to Monastir and take immediate measures for the suppression of this revolt. Shemsi Pasha passed through Salonica by special train on the 6th July, taking with him two Albanian battalions, which had been persuaded to entrain by stories of a Bulgarian or Servian insurrection at Monastir, which they were required to suppress. Almost immediately after his arrival in Monastir, however, he was shot down by an officer, in the presence of a considerable number of troops, which made no attempt to hinder or avenge the deed. The task of suppressing the military revolt was then intrusted to Marshal Osman Pasha, who arrived here from Constantinople on the 9th July, and proceeded to Monastir on the 12th. He did nothing of any importance, however, till the 17th, when he caused the troops to be assembled, and directed Major-General Osman Hedayet Pasha, Commandant of Monastir, to read out to them a telegram from the Sultan. The General, however, had hardly commenced to read, when he was fired at, and somewhat severely wounded by a soldier who stepped from the ranks.

In the meantime troops began to arrive in rapid succession from Asia Minor. Between the 15th and the 24th July 18,000 Anatolian Redifs were landed here from Smyrna, and dispatched towards Monastir as rapidly as transport could be provided for them. But as they had all been won over to the Young Turkish cause, and refused absolutely to move a hand against their revolted comrades, their arrival served only to strengthen the hands of the revolutionary party.

In the meantime Niazi Bey had been joined by two Staff officers from Monastir, Lieutenant-Colonel Selaheddin Bey and Major Hassan Bey, and established his headquarters in the neighbourhood of Ohrida, where he gradually increased his armed force, and endeavoured to consolidate his position by winning the sympathies of the surrounding populations and inculcating the doctrine of the "Constitutional" party. He also entered into negotiations with the leaders of the various Greek and Bulgarian bands, with a view to persuading them that the objects they were pursuing would also be attained by the establishment of constitutional government.

The success which attended these efforts was so general that the Committee, which was now in almost perpetual session at Salonica, was encouraged to accelerate its action. On the 16th and 17th July Proclamations were issued by Niazi Bey, boldly declaring the illegality of the existing Government, and demanding the restoration of the Constitution of 1292 A.H. (A.D. 1876). On the 20th the Mussulman population of Ohrida rose in support of this demand and seized the military stores, containing some 900 rifles. During the night of the 22nd Marshal Osman Pasha was forcibly carried off from Monastir, and at noon on the following day the Constitution was formally proclaimed on the parade ground in front of the main barracks, in the presence of the Vali, the civil and military officials, and the entire garrison of the place, including several of those battalions of Anatolian Redifs which had been transported from Smyrna in such frantic haste for the purpose of suppressing the movement.

These operations were ostensibly carried out by the armed irregulars and deserters from Resna and Ohrida, under the command of the officers above mentioned, but the attitude of the Monastir garrison, which recent additions had raised to nine battalions, as well as of the civil employés and population, left no possibility of doubt that the movement enjoyed almost universal sympathy, and that any idea of repression or opposition to it was impracticable in the district of Monastir.

Similar pronunciamientos took place during the day at Uskub, Serres, Kiuprulu, Ghevgheli, and other places in the three vilayets, and everywhere the impression produced was the same as in Monastir.

Salonica itself, though the centre from which the operations were mainly directed, was held in reserve, it being originally intended, if all went smoothly, to proclaim the Constitution here on the 27th. As the result of the Proclamation at all other places became known, the date was changed to the 25th; but about 2 A.M. on the 24th a telegram was received from the Grand Vizier, Saïd Pasha, informing the Inspector-

General that the Sultan had acceded to the desire of his people, and had decided to re-establish the suspended Constitution of 1876, and a little after 9 o'clock the announcement was publicly made by Hilmi Pasha himself from the steps of the Government House, and saluted by the discharge of 101 guns.

The revolution thus successfully carried out was effected at a sacrifice (so far as can be ascertained) of less than twenty lives.

The second part of the year, commencing from the 24th July, bore a very different aspect from the first. Though conflicts between Greeks and Bulgarians over questions relating to churches and schools were not infrequent, and though, especially towards the latter end of the period, signs were not wanting which pointed to the danger of a possible recommencement of the old internecine strife, yet band activity, the atrocities of antartes and the captures of comitadjis were no longer the principal topics of interest. The total number of political murders, of which I possess a record, during the last five months of the year was as follows:—

August	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	8
September	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	7
October	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	25
November	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	15
December	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	21
Total										71

This second part may be divided into three periods, the characteristics of which are sufficiently clearly defined, though they seem to stand in no obvious relation of natural sequence or of cause and effect towards each other.

The first period was one of public rejoicing, during which all administrative work was at a complete standstill. It lasted from the 24th July to the end of August, and was entirely given up to demonstrations, processions, speech-making, and the organization of fêtes in honour of surrendered brigands, deputations from the towns of the interior or visitors from the capital and abroad. During this period considerably over 100 bands, numbering 700 or 800 men, came in and publicly surrendered to the authorities, not counting the local "affiliés," who simply returned to their homes and resumed their ordinary avocations. In addition to these, a considerable number of Greek and Servian bands, while declining to effect a public surrender, suspended their operations and gradually withdrew across their respective frontiers.

Upwards of 30,000 visitors from the interior and from abroad are estimated to have passed through Salonica in the same time.

The second period was that of strikes. Beginning on the 23rd August with the employés of the Tobacco Régie, the railways, and the trams, it continued until the second week in October, by which time no category of workmen or employés remained in Salonica which had not seen its wages increased by from 20 to 30 per cent.

The third period was that of the "Boycottage," which commenced with the refusal of the lightermen to discharge the Austrian-Lloyd steamer "Tirol" on the 11th October, five days after the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and has practically engrossed public attention until the end of the year.

During the second two periods a certain amount of attention was occasionally devoted to the Parliamentary elections; but, considering the importance of the constitutional changes effected, and considering how much was expected from the labours of Parliament, when it should eventually be constituted, it is remarkable how little public interest was in general excited by the electoral campaign.

The actual election of Deputies, which ended on the 8th November, in the return of six Mussulmans, three Greeks, two Bulgarians, and a Jew as representatives of the Salonica Vilayet, passed almost unnoticed by the public, causing less commotion than might easily arise over the selection of vestrymen in an English parish. Such excitement as there was arose in connection with the nomination of the intermediate Delegates or "Electors of the Second Degree," which gave rise to much bickering between the leaders of the different nationalities and the Committee of Union and

Progress, leaving them all nearly equally dissatisfied. The reason of this seems to be that, whereas the choice of the persons who were ultimately to represent the province in Parliament was made by the Committee, after discussion with the various national organizations, so early in the proceedings that at least nine out of the twelve were publicly known as far back as the end of August, and the electors of the Second Degree voted almost universally to order, the election of the latter on the other hand was made by the various nationalities a test of strength, each striving to establish, by the number of such Delegates which it secured, the veracity of its pretensions to numerical superiority over the rest. Even so, however, although these preliminary elections gave rise to numerous and bitter complaints of unfair treatment and gerrymandering against the Young Turks, many of which were undoubtedly well-founded, yet they remained unaccompanied by any very serious disturbances or breaches of the peace.

Alongside, and yet independent of the Young Turkish movement, with which it appeared to be sometimes in collaboration and sometimes in direct opposition, there was noticeable throughout the year another Nationalist movement of which it seems probable that more will be heard in the near future. This is the Albanian movement which, though known to exist as far back as the Congress of Berlin, had made little apparent progress up to the end of 1907, when it was still heard of only in connection with a few obscure newspapers, published in Bucharest, Sophia, or elsewhere, and one or two shady adventurers who endeavoured to persuade the world that they were at the head of it. The Government at Constantinople, while favouring to a certain extent the development of an Albanian national sentiment in Lower Epirus, as a counterpoise to Hellenism, discouraged it everywhere that Hellenism did not seem to constitute a greater danger and kept close watch on it throughout, to prevent it getting out of hand. It was, however, known that an Albanian secret Committee existed at Korytza, branches of which were established successively at Arghyrocastro, Delvino, Permeti, Tepeleni, Colonia, and Lescovic, and probably at other places also.

Like the Young Turks, so also the Albanians seem to have found in the schools the aptest ground for the inculcation of their principles, one of the most active propagators of which was a certain Tchertchis Topouli, of Arghyrocastro, Professor at the Monastir Lycée. Some time in 1906 Tchertchis seceded from this school, accompanied by the larger number of his Albanian pupils, and went to form a band in the mountains behind Korytza, together with his brother Baio, and Islam Bey Clissoura. Not very much was heard of their doings until early in the present year, when Islam Clissoura, tiring of his arduous life in the hills, obtained the pardon of the Government by denouncing his associates, twenty of whom were promptly arrested in Arghyrocastro and neighbouring villages by a Bosniac Major of gendarmerie named Khalil Effendi. On the 8th March Topouli's band avenged themselves by shooting down Bimbashi Khalil in the market-place of Arghyrocastro, and nine days later they repulsed a military detachment, which had been dispatched from Janina in their pursuit, after a sharp combat in which no less than seven soldiers were killed and two gendarmes severely wounded. About the same time another officer of gendarmerie was murdered at Permeti.

On the 15th May the small port of Santi Quaranta was pillaged by an Albanian band under Dino Emini, the booty amounting to at least £1,200, and the presence of several other bands was reported in the districts of Arghyrocastro and Delvino, whose activity took the form of a mixture of opposition to Greek educational propaganda with brigandage pure and simple.

On the 10th May, His Majesty's Consul at Monastir reported that in that vilayet the Albanian Nationalist movement was arousing a keener attention than previously noticed on the part of the authorities. A number of arrests, he remarked, had been made, but the Government showed a curious hesitancy in prosecuting the trial of the persons arrested.

A certain Idris Effendi, of Yakova, had been kept in prison for eight months without trial, Fehim Bey Zavalan and Yashar Effendi, who, like Tchertchis Topouli, had been Professor in a school at Monastir, were administratively exiled, and a

considerable number of persons, including a well-known Protestant preacher named Gligor Tsilka, had been arrested at Korytza on charges that were not well defined.

Somewhat more general restlessness than usual was noticeable also in the north-eastern portion of Albania early in the year, though it would be difficult to establish that it had any connection with the movement in the south. Acts of aggression against Catholics as well as Serbs, were numerous in the districts of Yakova, Ghilan, and Rugova, leading in January to the dispatch of a military force under Shemsi Pasha. An anti-Christian movement developed itself towards the end of the same month in Prisrend also, and though the presence of Shemsi Pasha's force was sufficient to repress them for a time, both movements broke out again in March. The Ljuma clan joined the inhabitants of Presrend, where over a thousand Mussulmans assembled under arms, and the Christians of the town were compelled to close their shops. Five more battalions of infantry were sent to strengthen Shemsi's hands, and several encounters with Albanians took place, in one of which, at least, artillery was employed and considerable loss of life occurred, and in presence of this display of force the Albanians consented to arrange a truce.

Early in July another gathering of Albanians was reported at Ferizovitch in the Sandjak of Prishtina. The causes which led to its assembly remain obscure, but it seems to have been directed in the first place against Austria and the Oriental railways, and secondly against the Mutessarif, Ismail Pasha, who was obliged to evacuate his post, together with the Mudir of Ferizovitch itself. Still the Albanians continued to collect, until their numbers were officially estimated at from 10,000 to 15,000. Whatever may have been the motives which brought them together, their presence was turned to account with extraordinary dexterity by the Committee of Union and Progress, which was then on the eve of its great coup. The Uskub branch of the Committee, amongst whose members were Colonel Vasfi Bey, Salih Bey, ex-President of the Uskub Municipality, and Hadji Mustapha Hamdi, the influential Mufti of Prishtina, succeeded in persuading them that the best remedy for their grievances lay in the assembling of a national "Medjliss," and telegrams dispatched to Constantinople from Ferizovitch in their name affirming their entire solidarity with the Committee of Union and Progress are believed to have had no small influence in deciding the Sultan to grant the desired Constitution. No less than sixty of their chiefs were brought into Uskub by special train on the 25th July to take part in the rejoicings which celebrated the success of the Young Turkish revolutionary movement, but even at that early moment the Uskub Committee showed its prudent distrust by obliging the mass of their followers to remain at a distance from the town.

It was not long before indications were apparent that the doubts entertained as to the sincerity of the enthusiasm of the Albanians in the cause of constitutional reform were not ill-founded. The restored Constitution was not a fortnight old when troops were dispatched hot-foot to suppress a reactionary movement under the leadership of the notorious brigand Issa Bolyetintatz, which, however, was at once put down. Early in August a reactionary movement was reported from Yakova, where the populace, under the leadership of a certain Hassan Shlakou, expelled the judicial authorities, the police, and the Christian gendarmes, and announced that in future they would be governed only in accordance with the religious law. The district of Ipek likewise declared itself hostile to the Constitution.

Another attempt to unite the Arnauts in a reactionary movement was made in November, again under the leadership of Issa Bolyetintatz, assisted by two other notorious local bullies and brigands named Hassan Hussein, of Budakovo, and Rustem Kabash. A considerable force was set in motion against them, the movement was promptly suppressed, and Issa's fortress near Mitrovitza battered to the ground; but he himself escaped capture, after inflicting a loss of five killed and eight wounded upon the pursuing troops. Rustem Kabash was arrested, as were also three Chiefs in the district of Ghilan, who were believed to have been participators in this movement; but the Young Turks, like the Government which

preceded them, do not seem to have felt themselves strong enough to deal severely with them, and they were subsequently released.

The restiveness in the north, however, though symptomatic and significant of difficulties yet to be overcome, had no direct connection with the "Nationalist" movement properly so-called. More important in that connection, though less ostentatious, is the educational activity which displayed itself throughout Southern Albania immediately after the proclamation of the Constitution. Early in August an Albanian school, founded and to be supported by voluntary contributions, in subscribing to which the population displayed a remarkable liberality, was established in Elbassan, two schools in Korytza, which had been closed under the old régime, were reopened, and the example of these two places was rapidly followed by all the principal towns throughout the south.

In November an Albanian National Congress assembled at Monastir, attended by fifty delegates, representing every section of the Albanian people—Mussulman, Catholic, and Orthodox. The ostensible object of the meeting was the apparently elementary one of agreeing upon the adoption of a common alphabet, and the discussions were mainly literary; but the importance of the subject from a nationalist point of view is incontestable, the possession of a common medium of inter-communication being absolutely essential to the formation of a real national sentiment. The Congress eventually decided on the adoption of the so-called Constantinople alphabet, which is based on the Italian with certain modifications and additional characters. It agreed to assemble again at Janina in 1910.

As might naturally be expected, in view of the character of the revolution accomplished in July, the changes effected in the higher ranks, both of the army and of the civil administration, were very numerous. Indeed, almost every military and civil official of any importance was either revoked, promoted, or transferred in the course of the year.

Sherif Mohammed Raouf Pasha, who had succeeded Hassan Fehmi Pasha as Vali of Salonica in October 1904, left on the 28th May, at little more than forty-eight hours' notice, to act as Imperial Commissioner in Samos. Having, at the expiration of his mission, obtained permission to visit Constantinople, he did not return to Salonica, but was eventually transferred to the Vilayet of Aidin. Nazim Pasha, who was at first nominated to succeed him, was transferred shortly afterwards to Adrianople and subsequently reappointed Governor-General of the Archipelago. Eventually the post of Vali of Salonica was conferred on Ali Danish Bey, President of the Court of Cassation at the Council of State, who arrived here on the 22nd August.

Essad Pasha, Acting Commander of the IIIrd Army Corps, was recalled in June, under the circumstances explained in the earlier portion of this Memorandum, and replaced first (the 26th June) by Ibrahim Pasha, and subsequently (the 29th August) by Mahmoud Shefket Pasha, Vali and Commandant of Uskub, whose place was taken by Ferik Hadi Pasha, formerly commanding the Monastir military zone. Hifzi Bey, who had occupied the post of Vali of Monastir since February 1907, retired on a pension in December and was replaced by Ferik Fakhri Pasha, Commander of the Serres Redif Division.

The Inspector-General of the three vilayets, Hussein Hilmi Pasha, left for Constantinople on the 29th November, after handing over the Presidency of the Financial Commission to Mahmoud Shefket Pasha.

Reshid Pasha, Mutessarif of Serres, who had been an active member of the Committee of Union and Progress before the Revolution, was promoted to be Vali of Adrianople, and proceeded to take up his new post on the 10th August, and was succeeded in September by Mazhar Bey who, as Mektoubdjî at Uskub, had also rendered important services to the Young Turkish cause. Mazhar Bey, however, only remained at Serres for three months, being promoted in December to the post of Mutessarif of Pera.

Amongst other changes, I may mention that the Belgian officer, Major Leon Bureau, who had done good work in connection with the recently-founded Police School in this place, quitted the Ottoman service on the expiration of his renewed contract in October. Behdjet Bey, whose name became familiar to His Majesty's Embassy in connection with the question of custom-house reforms in 1907, was removed to Constantinople in August, while Niazi Bey, whose inefficient handling of the police of Salonica had been a frequent source of complaint, was forced to resign at the end of September, and shortly after died. Ata Bey, Ottoman Delegate on the Financial Commission, was appointed Director of Posts and Telegraphs, and left for Constantinople on the 3rd August. His antecedents, however, and particularly his conduct while Vali of Erzeroum, having rendered him an object of suspicion to the Young Turks, he was intercepted at Dedeaghat and compelled to return here, after which he disappeared from public view and his place on the Commission has remained unoccupied.

Amongst the changes in the higher military commands I may mention that Hussein Remzi Pasha, commanding the 5th Division and the Uskub military zone, was expelled by the officers of the garrison on the 23rd July, and Ibrahim Pasha, Commandant of Prisrend, on the 25th. Ferik Muzaffer Pasha, who had been here for a year past nominally as Inspector of Artillery, and had recently been sent to Uskub in connection with the projected prolongation of the railway from Mitrovitza to the Bosnian frontier, was deported under circumstances of gross indignity on the 6th August.

Hussein Remzi Pasha was succeeded by Hamdi Pasha, Commandant of the North-Western section of the Bulgarian frontier. Colonel Javid Bey, Commanding the Salonica Regiment of Gendarmerie, was appointed in October Mutessarif and Commandant of Tashlidja in the place of the veteran Suleiman Pasha, who was nominated Senator. I am told that the number of officers of all ranks, belonging to the IIIrd Army Corps, who have been placed on the retired list since July, exceeds 600.

As in the case of the last Annual Report, I annex a tabular statement showing the total number of political assassinations brought to my notice within the three vilayets during the course of the year. The figures throughout show a diminution of at least 30 per cent., save only in the two particulars of Moslems killed and crimes of which the authors remained unknown, in both of which there is an increase. The diminution is most marked in the case of crimes attributed to Bulgarians, which fell from 521 to 198, and of insurgents, &c., killed in encounters, which fell from 417 to 116, only two such cases having been recorded subsequent to the Revolution.

TABLE showing the Total Number of Political Assassinations, &c., reported during the year 1908.

	Bulgars.	Greeks.	Serbs.	Vlachs	Moslems.	Jews.	Soldiers, Zaptiehs, &c.	Total.
Killed by Bulgars ...	58	72	8	3	34	...	23	198
" Patriarchists ...	212	22	...	20	8	1	13	276
" Serbs ...	28	...	1	...	1	...	3	33
" Vlachs ...	2	4	...	4	...	...	...	10
" Moslems ..	80	11	10	2	18	...	1	122
" Unknown ...	182	63	9	7	64	...	...	325
Armed insurgents killed in encounters with troops, &c.	87	13	11	...	5	...	...	116
Totals ...	649	185	39	36	130	1	40	1,080

Macedonian Financial Commission.

The working of this Commission is particularly interesting as giving the closest and most accurate examination by foreigners into the real working and, consequently, into the real defects, of Turkish provincial administration.

It is for this reason that I give an account of it at considerable length.

The position of the Commission at the beginning of the year was a somewhat anomalous one, as its two years' mandate had expired on the 21st December, 1907, and the Porte had failed to instruct the Inspector-General that the Commission was to continue its activity. The formal meetings were therefore interrupted for a few days on the pretext of Hilmi Pasha's indisposition, but the necessary instructions arrived shortly after the new year, and the Commission resumed its sittings on the 4th January.

On the 8th January the official discussion of the Budget estimates for 1324 was begun, and the same procedure was followed as in the preceding years, that is to say, that a previous examination was made by an informal Committee composed of the French, Italian, British, and Ottoman Delegates, assisted by the local financial officials, of each part of the Budget before it was presented to the Commission at its official meetings for discussion and acceptance in first and second reading.

On the expenditure side the estimates were increased by £T. 49,313 for civil charges, of which £T. 40,393 were effective, including no less than £T. 18,340 for judicial salaries, £T. 4,941 for financial services, £T. 5,358 for the extension of the forest reorganization scheme, and £T. 4,661 for the payment of fixed salaries to the officials charged with land registration and the issue of title deeds under the new Tapou Law. The increase of judicial salaries had already formed the subject of a conflict between the Inspector-General and the foreign members of the Commission, when the latter, with the approval of their Ambassadors, refused to sanction supplementary credits for this purpose. Their opposition was, however, withdrawn under further instructions from Constantinople, and the new credits were included in the estimates, although in the absence of any supervision or control no corresponding improvement in the administration of justice was to be anticipated from the increased outlay. The increased charges in the other departments were all approved by the foreign members of the Commission as necessitated by reforms in the respective services, and likely to be justified by increased receipts.

No change was made in the military estimates, the Inspector-General having rejected a proposal of the Ministry of War to increase the credits for army provisions in consequence of the rise in prices.

With regard to the gendarmerie Budget the late General Degiorgis had intended to ask for a larger credit than in the preceding year, with a view to bringing the force up to its full organic strength. But in consequence of the General's absence on leave, his draft Budget was not laid before the Commission while the estimates were under discussion, and it was decided to vote the same credits as in 1323, and to provide for any increased expenditure on the gendarmerie from the credit for unforeseen expenses, which was maintained at £T. 26,000 for that purpose.

In preparing the estimates of receipts, the Commission adopted as a basis of calculation for the three principal direct taxes (real property tax, military exemption tax, and professional tax) the proportion of 85 per cent. of the totals entered as due in the registers. This somewhat sanguine estimate was not quite justified by the accounts of 1323, only 82·66 per cent. being actually realized on the three principal taxes, but the total encashments proved to be only ·82 per cent. below the estimate, or 4 per cent. more than was collected in 1322 and 11 per cent. more than in 1321. In the course of the discussion of the estimates of receipts from the military exemption tax, the question was raised of the inclusion in the Budget of the exemption tax paid by Moslems, which is now collected directly by the Ministry of War, without any control by the financial authorities, but the proposal was not adopted. It is satisfactory to know that this anomaly has come to an end with the old régime, and that

with a unified Budget the Ministry of War will no longer be permitted to collect and dispose of resources of its own without control.

The estimates for 1324, as drawn up by the Commission and forwarded to Constantinople before the end of February, were as follows:—

	£ T.		£ T.	p.
Local revenues	1,918,760	Civil expenditure	963,488	1
3 per cent. Customs surtax... ..	660,000	Military expenditure	1,488,183	3
Advance by Public Debt	250,000	Railway guarantees, &c.	377,088	6
Total	2,828,760	Total	2,828,760	0

On the 11th April the Commission was informed by the Inspector-General that the Ministry of Finance proposed to modify the Budget estimates—

1. By increasing the estimate of receipts from the 3 per cent. customs surtax from £T. 660,000 to £T. 759,000 on the basis of statistics supplied by the Ministry of Customs, which subsequently proved to be quite misleading. No objection was raised to this step, on condition that in addition to the product of the 3 per cent. surtax, the full amount of the advance of £T. 250,000 by the Public Debt should still remain available to cover any eventual deficit of the Macedonian Budget arising from the non-payment of the floating debt.

2. By reducing to £ T. 6,000 the credit for unforeseen expenses which, as stated above, had been maintained at £ T. 26,000 in order to provide for a contingent increase in the strength of the gendarmerie. The foreign members entered a protest against this modification as an infringement of the règlement of the Financial Commission, and as the result of diplomatic pressure by the Embassies at Constantinople, the proposed reduction of the credit for unforeseen expenses was abandoned, and the estimates were approved by the Porte practically as submitted by the Financial Commission, which was informed by the Inspector-General on the 6th May that an Iradé had been issued authorizing the maintenance in the Budget estimates of the original credit of £ T. 26,000.

At the end of March the Financial Commission had the satisfaction of learning that the Porte had at last sanctioned the improvements which it had proposed in the method of collecting the direct taxes by the substitution of fixed salaries to the Tahsildars for the old system of part payments by results and by the creation in each *caza* of individual registers or rolls of tax-payers, and as the necessary preparations had been made in anticipation of the sanction of the Porte for giving immediate effect to these measures, it was possible to apply them almost from the beginning of the financial year 1324.

At about the same time it appeared as if the Financial Commission would be successful in taking the first effective step towards remedying the crying abuses which exist in the assessment of the “verghi” tax on house property, as the Inspector-General gave his consent to the appointment of a Commission of Experts, to be presided over by Rami Effendi, the Finance Ministry’s Inspector for the Vilayet of Salonica, for the purpose of making a preliminary inquiry destined to serve as a basis for a more equitable assessment of the tax. Owing, however, to the procrastinating methods of Rami Effendi, and his subsequent summons to Constantinople to assist the Minister of Finance, absolutely nothing was accomplished, and this attempt to redress abuses and at the same time to give greater elasticity to the revenues by the most obvious and legitimate measures was for the present defeated by official apathy.

In consequence of repeated observations by the foreign members on the subject of the floating debt, an examination was made of the “livre des dettes” of the Treasury Service by the Inspectors of the Commission in conjunction with the Managers of the Ottoman Bank and the Defterdars of the three vilayets. The results were laid before the commission on the 27th May, when it was shown that the net indebtedness of the three vilayets at the end of November 1907 was £ T. 277,600 43 prs. Attention was drawn at intervals throughout the year to the injury inflicted

on the financial services by the Porte's failure to deal with this question, but without effect, and the statements of the figure of the floating debt furnished by the Inspector-General at the end of each month have only varied slightly, as the local receipts were more or less satisfactory, while army pay and civil salaries have been two months in arrear during the greater part of the year, and the payments to army contractors have been similarly delayed.

The Financial Commission did not proceed to Monastir in June in the usual course in consequence of the first mutterings of the storm which at the end of July overthrew the old despotic régime and set up a constitutional form of government in Turkey. All this period of revolution was naturally one of decreased activity for the Commission, and the working of the financial services was seriously affected during the weeks which preceded and followed the proclamation of the Constitution, by the impaired authority of the Inspector-General, by the neglect of ordinary duties on the part of the great majority of officials, whose attention was absorbed by the rapid movement of political events and by the apparent belief of a large section of the community that their new-found liberty meant liberty to withhold payment of their dues to the Government, not to mention their private debts. The result was shown in a sensible decrease in revenue receipts during the summer months. The military movements which were occasioned by the revolution involved considerable expense, and at the end of July it was found that the military authorities had largely exceeded the credits due to them proportionately to the budgetary provisions for the year. It was also found that, under pressure from the military authorities, and in defiance of the Inspector-General's injunctions, the 3 per cent. charge on local revenues assigned to the Public Works Department was again being diverted to other purposes. But on the subsidence of the wave of excitement which swept over the country wiser counsels began to prevail. The influence of the Young Turkey Committee of Union and Progress was employed with good effect to impress upon the population the necessity of supporting the new Government by the punctual payment of taxes, the financial officials were gradually brought back to the more regular performance of their duties, and measures were ultimately devised by the Financial Commission to prevent military expenditure in excess of the budgetary provisions, and to insure the repayment to the Public Works fund of the sums which had been diverted from it in the course of the financial year. It may fairly be claimed that the financial administration of the three vilayets, defective as it still is in many respects, has stood the strain of the events of 1908 far better than might have been expected, as is shown by the fact that up to the end of December (o.s.) 78 per cent. of local revenue had been collected, as against 82.26 per cent. at the same date in the preceding year.

On the 16th September the accounts of the financial year 1323 were presented to the Financial Commission by the Treasury Service, and showed the following results :—

	£ T.	£T.	
Expenditure	2,718,487	being 38,355 less than the estimate.	
Local receipts	1,837,011	15,235	„ „
Excess of expenditure over local receipts	887,477	23,130	„ „

The Treasury disposed of the following resources to cover this deficit :—

	£ T.
Advance by Public Debt	250,000
3 per cent. Customs surtax	425,530
Subsidies from Ministry of Finance	151,014
Total	826,546 [sic]

The difference, £ T. 54,931, is the sum which was added to the floating debt owing to the failure of the Porte during the year 1323 fully to carry out its engagement to cover the difference between expenditure and local revenue.

An examination of the figures shows that, although the local receipts encashed fell short of the estimate by £ T. 15,235, or less than 1 per cent. of the estimate, the encashment of current receipts of the year exceeded the estimate by £ T. 39,777 and surpassed the results of 1922 by £ T. 29,032. There was a diminution in the amount of arrears collected of £ T. 44,023, due to the improvement in the financial services and the consequent reduction in the amount of recoverable arrears. Allowing for the suppression of the domestic animals tax, and of the personal tax, there was an increase of revenue as compared with 1922 of £ T. 67,806, or about 4 per cent., and as compared with 1921 of £ T. 193,224, or more than 11 per cent.

In anticipation of the meeting of the Turkish Parliament, the Ministry of Finance called for Budget estimates for the three vilayets for the year 1925, to be included in the general Budget of the Empire, and the Financial Commission began the examination of the materials laid before it by the different Departments on the 10th October. The same procedure was followed as in dealing with the previous Budgets, and the work was completed on the 14th November, when the "Exposé des Motifs" drawn up by the French Delegate M. Steeg was read and approved by the Commission.

According to these estimates the nominal increase in expenditure for 1925 is £ T. 17,661, but this increase is apparent only, and in reality there is a decrease in estimated effective expenditure on the civil administration of £ T. 9,775. If account is taken of this decrease, as well as of a transfer from the military to the gendarmerie Budget of £ T. 1,785 for the pay of military officers serving in the gendarmerie schools, and of the fact that provision is made for an increased outlay of £ T. 16,129 for gendarmerie, £ T. 10,265 for police, and £ T. 1,161 for military pensions, it will be seen that the cost of the rest of the judicial, civil, and financial administrations is reduced by £ T. 39,461 as compared with the year 1924. The military credits were calculated on the same basis as in 1924, with the exception of the transfer of £ T. 1,785 to the gendarmerie Budget referred to above.

The estimates of revenue were again framed as far as the direct taxes and the Aghnam (sheep tax) are concerned on the results of the preceding year, while the tithe estimates were based on an average of the adjudications of the last three years. The figures adopted for the special resources assigned by the Porte to cover the excess of expenditure over local revenue, namely the 3 per cent. customs surtax and the advance made by the Public Debt were the same as for 1924.

The following is a summary of the estimates for 1925, which were forwarded to Constantinople before the end of November :

£ T.				£ T.			
Local revenues	...	...	1,936,421	Civil expenditure	...	...	969,122
3 per cent. Customs surtax...	...	...	660,000	Military expenditure...	...	...	1,486,397
Advance by Public Debt	...	...	250,000	Railway guarantees, &c.	...	...	390,901
Total	...	...	2,846,421	Total	...	...	2,846,421

On the 29th November the Inspector-General, Hussein Hilmi Pasha, left Salonica for Constantinople, having been summoned to take his seat in the Cabinet as Minister of the Interior. Hilmi Pasha's services during the six years which he has passed in Macedonia as Inspector-General are so well-known that it is unnecessary to enlarge upon them here. It suffices to say that during the three years and three months of his presidency of the Financial Commission he filled a most difficult post with remarkable tact and ability. Mahmoud Chevkett Pasha, the General Commanding the IIIrd Army Corps, who has been appointed Acting Inspector-General and President of the Financial Commission, has made an excellent first impression, but it would be premature to say more at present.

In summarizing the results of the year it may be said that they have been not unsatisfactory as far as the routine of the financial administration is concerned. Flagrant abuses on the part of officials of all classes have been less frequent, some

improvements have been introduced in the methods of collecting revenue, and the returns show that the financial machinery of the three vilayets has been able to pass through a period of grave disturbance almost intact, and with hardly any appreciable loss to the Treasury. The work of the Inspectors and of the other staff of the Commission has again been performed with zeal and discretion, and their reports have added to the mass of valuable information which they have already accumulated for the benefit of the Ministry of Finance, whenever it is in a position to profit by it.

On the other hand it is necessary to chronicle a series of disappointments and delays, in respect of other improvements and reforms which the Commission had hoped to initiate or to further. Besides its failure, as recorded above, to obtain a solution of the difficulty presented by the floating debt, or to effect the preliminary steps towards a much needed revision of the registers of the real property tax, and the adjustment of the system of forced labour on public works and its commutation in money upon a more equitable and practical basis, the Commission has been obliged regretfully to admit that the experiment of the substitution in certain districts of a commuted tithe for the farmed tithe has not been a success, and that its further extension on the present lines is undesirable. This result must be ascribed to the inherent difficulty of properly assessing the tax in the absence of anything resembling a scientific survey, or of a regular system of land registration, to the lack of zeal and capacity shown by the financial officials charged with its collection, and to the too optimistic estimate of $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. to cover the cost of collection and loss by default of payment, which was adopted by Hilmi Pasha at the inception of the experiment. Nor has there been any progress to report with regard to two schemes which had engaged the earnest attention of the Commission, and from which the most beneficial results may eventually be anticipated. These are : (1) The scheme for the encouragement of agriculture and the improvement of live-stock, and (2) the proposal for the commencement of a scientific Cadastral Survey on an experimental scale in the Vardar Nahié of the kaza of Salonica. Thanks to the apathy or active obstruction of the Ministries of Agriculture and Public Works these schemes have remained in suspense at Constantinople, the first since May 1907, and the second since February 1908, and the credits voted for their execution in the Budget have been unemployed. The sense of discouragement produced by such experiences is not diminished by the ever-present feeling that, in consequence of the political events of 1908, the days of the Financial Commission are numbered, and that it is useless and even impolitic for its members to make fresh proposals for the furtherance of projects however advantageous, the execution of which in the absence of any controlling influence is highly problematical.

Macedonian Gendarmerie.

Although on general lines an improvement is noticeable in the discipline and the efficiency of individual gendarmes no serious progress can be said to have taken place in the reforms of the force as a whole during the year 1907-8. The principal reasons for this unsatisfactory state of affairs are as follows :—

1. The long interval that occurred between the departure of General Degiorgis in November 1907 on leave, during the course of which he died, and the arrival of his successor General di Robilant in the latter part of May 1908. During the whole of this interval the gendarmerie was at the mercy of the then Inspector-General Hussein Hilmi Pasha who was enabled, in the absence of any responsible European at the head of gendarmerie affairs, to pursue unchecked the reactionary policy towards gendarmerie reform which at that time found favour with Yildiz.
2. *The Attitude of the new General.*—General di Robilant's attitude since his arrival has been marked by extreme aloofness towards the Turks and unsympathetic treatment of the foreign adjoints, with the exception per-

haps of Colonel Bonham. As a net result his Excellency lost the confidence of both the Ottoman and the European officers serving under his orders, and his failure to impress his personality on the Inspector-General further militated against the improvement of the gendarmerie.

3. *The Ottoman Revolution*.—This event besides plunging the country and especially the Government Departments into a state of confusion and uncertainty from which they as yet show little signs of emerging, led almost immediately to the cessation of work by the foreign officers, the British secteur excepted, and of course postponed *sine die* the inception of any important reforms.

The following points are worthy of notice :—

Recruiting.—No attempt has been made to deal with this question, and the material supplied continues to be unsatisfactory in quality and insufficient in quantity.

There is no improvement as to officers who continue to be insufficiently trained.

Schools continue to labour under the same difficulties as have been reported during the last five years. Otherwise they are doing good work.

Relations with the military have, it is satisfactory to say, very much improved, more especially since the beginning of the new régime.

Relations with the judiciary local authorities and the population have been satisfactory generally, and show improvement.

Gendarmerie duties have on the whole been satisfactorily performed, and, owing to the increasing experience of the officers and non-commissioned officers, show a distinct improvement.

Adrianople.

For some months before the revolution there had been very great discontent among the officers of the garrison at Adrianople, and for about a month after it a reaction was expected, owing to the attitude of the rank and file of the troops who rose against their officers, believing that the latter intended to dethrone the Sultan. For some days there was absolutely no authority, civil or military, in the town, but the Committee and the officers gradually recovered their influence, and no disorders occurred. The general effect produced in the vilayet by the change of régime seems to have been one of contentment, and this is mainly due to the removal to a great extent of corruption amongst the judiciary and other civil officials; but the most striking, though least lasting, feature was the fraternization between Bulgars and Greeks.

At the commencement of the year the animosity between the two races was lying dormant, though it was kept alive, on the one hand, by the propaganda of Bulgarian emissaries, and on the other by the Greek clergy; and the boycott of Bulgar workmen at Xanthi, mentioned in the Report for 1907, was brought to an end mainly by the firm and tactful attitude of the Kaimakam.

It was largely due to the action of the Greek clergy that feelings were again growing dangerously bitter, when the revolution intervened, and, in the general rejoicings that ensued, the strange spectacle was to be seen of Greeks and Bulgars embracing in the streets. This, however, did not last long.

Numerous disputes occurred over churches claimed both by Exarchists and Patriarchists, and the Greeks soon perceived that under the régime of liberty they were likely to lose much ground. This led to an attitude of coldness towards the Young Turks, while, on the other hand, there was a *rapprochement* between the Bulgars and the Turks. The development of this latter tendency was, of course, checked by the Bulgarian declaration of independence (though much of the resentment felt against Bulgaria seems to have been swallowed up in the even greater indignation felt at the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina), and the return of the refugees from Bulgaria, which had begun to take place in small numbers, also ceased. Before

the re-establishment of the Constitution no progress had been made towards a solution of this problem, whilst, on the other hand, there had been a considerable emigration of peasants from the northern districts into Bulgaria. The Vali, while complaining of the attitude of the Bulgarian Government, who, he said, encouraged the movement, seemed to His Majesty's Consul to be not over-distressed at the situation, and Major Sampson was of opinion that the Turkish frontier guards had been instructed not to be too strict in the prevention of emigration. The exodus was apparently caused chiefly by pressure brought to bear by bands of young men belonging to families which had emigrated in 1903 on those who had remained behind.

There has been a good deal of the band trouble in the vilayet, but, with very rare exceptions, the object of the bands seems to have been brigandage, pure and simple.

This state of affairs was due to the distress which, though not so widespread as had been anticipated owing to the failure of the preceding year's crops, was prevalent in many districts. Fortunately last year's harvest has been a good one in the vilayet.

Turkey in Asia.

Arabia.

In the Hedjaz, the usual state of insecurity and the usual robberies of caravans and pilgrims are reported, whilst the progress of the railway towards Medina afforded a good reason to the Bedouins of the region to make extra attacks upon the line and those working at it. The last attack was in December, but appears to have been repulsed, and the line quickly restored. The Turkish troops have had to engage in several punitive expeditions against the tribes in the vicinity of Medina, especially at the beginning of November.

The act of the new régime in dismissing the Vali Ahmed Rahib Pasha, who had been in power there now for fifteen years, and the Grand Sherif Ali, and their replacement respectively by Kiazim and Hussein Pashas should have a good effect, but enough time has not yet elapsed for proof of this to be given. The more immediate results of the Constitution were a few riots in Mecca, where attempts were made by the Committee to collect taxes for municipal purposes, and a general weakening of Government control, owing to the temporary dislocation of the machinery of local administration, and also owing to the fact that the Government were credited with the policy of endeavouring to curtail the privileges and powers of the Grand Sherif.

The Yemen has been fairly quiet during the year under review, but very great confusion was caused at Hodeidah by the revival of the Constitution. Those in power were, including Ahmed Feizi Pasha, the General in command, uncereemoniously dismissed as being partizans of the old régime, while, with the local branch of the Committee interfering in every branch of the administration, no one knew whose orders to obey. The very numerous Turks who had been living there in exile hastened to return to Constantinople.

The Arabs however, were well enough pleased with the idea of the Constitution, and returned Members to Parliament, and at the close of the year the Imam sent a deputation representing himself to visit Constantinople.

The new Vali is Hassan Tahsin Pasha, an upright and energetic Turk from Southern Albania. In conjunction with him, the Council of Ministers has elaborated a project of reforms for the Yemen, which appears to be an honest endeavour to introduce order and justice, and there is ground to hope for good results from its adoption.

The Nejd.

The affairs of the Nejd were related somewhat inaccurately in the Report for 1907, and I will briefly recapitulate the facts connected with this striking Oriental tragedy.

For many decades past, the rule over the northern part of that great tract of semi-populous country which stretches east and west between Damascus and Koweit, and which divides Mesopotamia on the north from pathless sands on the south-east and from the Hedjaz on the south-west, has been in the hands of the Reshid family, while the southern portion with its capital Riyadh has been subject to the family of Saoud.

The sovereignty of Hail and the north was for long in the hands of Mohamed-ibn-Reshid, whence it passed into the hands of Abdul Aziz, his son, and then to his grandson, Mu'tib.

The cousin of Abdul Aziz was named Hamoud-ibn-Reshid, and this man had three sons, named respectively, Sultan, Saoud, and Faisal. Shortly after the succession of the youthful Mu'tib to power, his cousin, Sultan-ibn-Hamoud, invited him to a hunting-party, and the young Emir assented, taking with him his brothers Mashael and Mohamed, and a large retinue, whilst another infant brother, named Saoud, had gone to Medina in company with Mu'tib's wife, and the most trusted adherents of the family to perform the pilgrimage. Sultan-ibn-Hamoud was accompanied by his two brothers, and on a day the six cousins went unattended in pursuit of game, when on a given signal each of the Hamoud family closed upon one of the Abdul Aziz family and killed his man. They returned then to the camp proclaiming that it was another cousin Tellah who had done the deed and that, in revenge, they had killed him.

The best warriors of the Mu'tib were absent, and the remainder acquiesced and acknowledged Sultan as the Emir of Hail. His initial success spread, and he gained over to himself all the Northern Nejd, including the important town of Bureideh, driving back thence the rival family of Saoud under its chief Abdul Aziz, who was obliged to retire to his capital at Riyadh.

In the spring of 1908 the tribes of Kassim called upon Sultan to advance upon Riyadh and to attack his rival, but he procrastinated and finally made a pact with Abdul Aziz-ibn-Saoud, yielding up to him Bureideh and even Kassim, reserving to himself on the extreme north, Shammar.

Sultan's inactivity was more than his adherents could bear, and they prevailed first upon him to retire in favour of his brother Saoud, and then upon Saoud to follow Sultan, as he was withdrawing with the best possessions of the tribe into a favourite spot in the hills, and to fall upon him and to destroy him and his family. Another motive which prompted Saoud to this fratricide was the fear lest Sultan should be reinstated with the assistance of the southern family.

Saoud-ibn-Reshid showed great weakness and incapacity for rule, and the partizans of the true ruling family were busy at work in favour of the boy Abdul Aziz, who was still at Medina. Meanwhile Abdul Aziz-ibn-Saoud kept rapidly increasing his borders until he was undisputed ruler of all Nejd with the exception of Hail city. Then the party of the true Reshid line attacked Saoud in his capital, and killed him and his brother, and proclaimed Abdul Aziz of the Reshid family Emir of Hail, and there at present they rule in his name.

The whole interest of the Nejd has been absorbed in these bloody internecine conflicts, and the Turkish Government has neither sought nor obtained the least influence in their matters, nor does it appear that they have had any important relations with their Eastern neighbours on the Persian Gulf.

Bagdad, Mosul, and Bussorah.

Throughout Mesopotamia the year was marked by more than the usual degree of insecurity and lawlessness and this, combined with the state of affairs on, and beyond the Persian border and the consequent military requisitions, did much to paralyze pilgrim traffic and trade in the vilayets of Mosul and Bagdad, and the administration of all three vilayets suffered greatly from financial depression.

During most of the year the navigation of the Tigris and Shat-el-Arab was unsafe for sailing craft, and on the 2nd April the "Blosse Lynch" of the Euphrates and

Tigris Steam Navigation Company was fired on by Arabs at two points near Amara, one fireman and three deck passengers being seriously wounded, and the vessel struck by at least fifty bullets. The danger zone extended from Umm-el-Henna above Amara to Abu Sidra below and is inhabited by the Beni Lam and Albu Muhammad tribes, whose leaders, Gadban and Seyhoud, were responsible for the outrage. The object of the attack was to effectually express their objections to certain reforms which were being introduced by a Commission under Nazim Pasha at Amara with a view to reducing the power of these two Sheikhs in favour of less dangerous Chiefs by a redistribution of Government leases. Gadban was doubtless encouraged by the fact that his attack on the "Khalifah" in 1906 had been allowed to pass unpunished. Nazim's policy was perhaps sound in principle but he forgot that he could not overrule Hassan Pasha, Vali of Bussorah, who was in Gadban's pay and who seized the opportunity of at once securing the temporary restoration of order on the river and enriching himself by cancelling all Nazim's reforms in return for bribes and promises of good behaviour. In June His Majesty's Consul-General at Bagdad proposed the active suppression of Gadban to stop our being used by the river Arabs as a stalking horse in their dealings with the Ottoman Government. He pointed out that it would not be necessary to embark on a war with the whole Beni Lam tribe, as Gadban had many enemies among the minor Sheikhs of his own tribe, whose co-operation could be secured as soon as it was made clear that the Turks were determined to punish him. But owing partly to lack of means in the vilayet and the political crisis which arose in the European provinces of the Empire, no measures were ever taken against Gadban.

Intertribal fighting occurred on the Tigris in June.

Colonel Ramsay succeeded in settling the long-standing dispute with regard to the Nakib's house next the Residency by a satisfactory compromise.

Plague broke out in Bagdad in May and continued sporadically for the rest of the year in a mild form.

The revival of the Constitution was hailed in Bagdad with enthusiasm and people of various creeds fraternized at first. The army officers demanded and obtained the dismissal of Sidki Pasha, Commander of the VIth Army Corps, and it soon became evident that the Acting Vali Nazim was without authority. In August he was forced by the mob to prohibit the export of wheat, and the excited state of the populace made it unsafe to insist on the rights of British exporters to complete their contracts, for fear of arousing an anti-foreign agitation. Some grain stores were looted by rioters in September, and in October the vacillations of the Vali and the unwise liberal propaganda of the Young Turks, who showed a lack of respect for the requirements of the Moslem faith during Ramazan, led to riots directed against the Jews.

At Mosul the Constitution was only welcomed as a means of getting rid of the unpopular Vali Mustapha Bey. The emissaries of the Salonica Committee, who arrived in October, aroused the anti-Jewish and anti-Christian feelings of the Moslem population by tactless speeches and were themselves soon discredited and obliged to leave.

Throughout the year His Majesty's Consul at Bussorah reported constant cases of piracy on the Shat-el-Arab which the Turkish authorities were quite incapable of dealing with. Attacks on sailing craft increased towards the end of the year, and Mr. Crow suggested that two British gunboats should co-operate with Turkish patrols on shore to put a stop to the nuisance. Finally, as a result of the repeated representations of the Embassy, two Turkish gunboats left Constantinople for Bussorah in December. The news of the proclamation of the Constitution was received at Bussorah with incredulity followed by astonishment fading into indifference, as the natives felt that it had no palpable effect on their fortunes.

The incident created by the discourtesy shown by the authorities of Katif to the officers of His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" in the summer of 1907 was finally settled in March when the Kaïmakam made full apology to Lieutenant-Commander Gouldsmith who called for the purpose at Katif.

In August the small Turkish garrison and town of Katif were besieged by a host of Bedouin Arabs and a massacre of the population was feared, but they succeeded in holding out till the end of the month when the town was relieved by reinforcements sent from Bagdad and Bussorah.

In Hassa several disturbances took place; on one occasion the Arabs captured a Turkish gun. At last the Bussorah authorities invited Ibn-Saoud to intervene and settle the intertribal differences.

Syria.

It would hardly be possible to find a more violent contrast than that between the Reports on Syria which reached this Embassy up to the end of July and those sent during the remainder of the year.

For the first seven months one finds nothing but complaints of every kind of injustice, venality, and corruption, from the Vali (the chief offender of all) downwards. Public security hardly existed. Smuggling was rampant, carried on as it was under a well-organized system.

Nazim Pasha, after only four months of office, has succeeded in keeping an effective control on the various Government Departments, and in improving the efficiency of the police and gendarmerie, with the result that the administration of the vilayet has been satisfactory, order has been maintained, and the flourishing business in the contraband of arms, tobacco, and tombac stopped, and this without recourse having been had to the military authorities.

In the Lebanon, the situation was quiet during the first half year and the new Governor, Franco Pasha, seemed to remain on good terms with all parties, though he showed a certain disinclination to co-operate with the Consuls-General especially in matters of finance.

The efforts of His Majesty's Government succeeded in bringing about, at all events, a temporary reconciliation between the two great Druse families of Arslan and Jumblat.

There were signs of the decrease of the excessive power of the Maronite clergy and a corresponding increase in the influence of the younger and better educated members of the community.

When the Constitution was re-established, immense discussion arose as to whether or not the Lebanon should send Members to the Turkish Parliament, and Franco Pasha became enveloped in a whirl of intrigues. On the one hand, the people of the Lebanon earnestly desired a reform of their Constitution which at present enables the Governor-General to exercise very unbridled power, and they would like to have a voice in the general control of the Empire; on the other hand they do not for one moment wish to lose the privileges they at present enjoy. Eventually no Members were sent to Constantinople.

The discontent with the arbitrary measures to which Franco Pasha showed himself prone was increased by the fact that he was regarded as an official of the old régime, but he seems to have learnt wisdom from the demonstrations of which he was the object, and his Administration has continued along sufficiently satisfactory lines. Reforms are in hand in connection with the method of election of Members for the Legislative Council.

From Damascus and Jerusalem there is nothing remarkable to chronicle.

Asia Minor.

It may be doubted whether, even at the time of the Armenian massacres, the Reports of His Majesty's Consuls in Eastern Anatolia drew a more gloomy picture of the general state of the Armenians than that contained in my predecessor's Report for 1907. Sir N. O'Connor wrote that his main hope of securing some measure of relief for these people lay in the fact that the Government were beginning to grow alarmed lest the Kurds, by enjoying too great license, should at last get out

of hand. For the first seven months of 1908 there was not the slightest change for the better, rather the reverse, and it appears unprofitable to relate in detail the various forms of oppression and violence with which the Armenians had to put up, and the various methods by which the efforts of His Majesty's Embassy on their behalf were evaded or baffled. The tale has already been told too often but the moral was perhaps more clearly pointed than ever that the very efforts of the British Government on behalf of the Armenians only increased the hostility and suspicion towards them of the Palace and thus tended, not to their advantage, but, on the contrary, to their serious detriment.

Van became a great centre for Armenian revolutionaries (called Fedai) mainly from Russia but some of native growth, and at the beginning of February a large number of rifles and cartridges were seized in that town. The Fedai defended themselves with dynamite bombs, killing some twenty soldiers, but they were of course suppressed. Again in March a quarrel between Fedai led to a massacre in which about fifty people were killed, but the Turkish authorities interfered and checked the disorder with commendable promptitude.

Disquiet and uneasiness naturally continued, especially as long as the Fedai remained in the town, and in the middle of May the Vali made a resolute attempt to get hold of them and was successful. Eighteen of the chiefs were arrested and subsequently nearly 100 of their followers, and further large amounts of fire-arms and ammunition and 400 lbs. of dynamite were seized. The other revolutionaries took warning and fled from the town. Similar events took place in some of the villages surrounding Van, and though in some cases excessive severity appears to have been used, yet it must be remembered that the Fedai with their perfect scheme of organization constituted a very real danger for the Turkish authorities and their action was well calculated to culminate in a general massacre. It must, therefore, be conceded that under the circumstances the Turks behaved on the whole with moderation.

In the remote mountains of Tiari, the Kurds in July made a raid upon the Nestorian Syrians, burning and pillaging all before them, and it is reported that 11,000 Christians were thus left homeless.

In the Vilayets of Diarbekir and Kharput, the oppression of Armenians was of exactly the same character as usual, and offers no particularly salient features. A special commission, however, which has been sent by the Palace to examine into sundry complaints made by the Eshreffs of Diarbekir against the famous Ibrahim Pasha, Viranshehir, exonerated the latter, and condemned, but pardoned, the Eshreffs. Thus this powerful chief gained more influence and power from the very cause that ought to have led to his downfall.

In the autumn of 1907 the Kurds of the Dersim had been guilty of raiding the surrounding villages, and in the spring of this year they incautiously relied on their impunity in the past and renewed the operation, but this time was once too many, and a force was sent against them which, at last, in the autumn, penetrated into their strongholds and administered drastic chastisement.

At Moush, Bitlis, Khizar, Boulanile, &c., things remained as bad as ever, if they did not even become worse, and robbery, rape, and murder were practised by the Kurds, and especially the Kurdish officials with complete impunity, until the despair and hopelessness of the Armenians seemed to reach its climax.

In Erzeroum the situation appears to have been by no means so acute, for few complaints were heard from that vilayet. Here, however, as throughout a great part of Anatolia, there was a great dearth of seed corn, which caused in the autumn a shortage in the harvest throughout the country. Distress on this account is general, though the Government has taken suitable measures to afford relief so far as is possible to the sufferers.

Such was the state of affairs when on the 24th July the news was telegraphed to all the provinces that the Constitution had been re-established. There ensued a period of stupor and incredulity, followed by outbursts of joy throughout the entire country,

and from Smyrna to Moush, and from Trebizond to Beyrout were witnessed the most unusual scenes of fraternization between Christians and Moslems; priests met with hodjas in the market place and publicly embraced, and liberty, equality, and fraternity became the order of the day. Not only political, but unfortunately all prisoners were released, and despite this, and the accompanying relaxation of the old repressive measures of administration, order, with a few inconsiderable exceptions, was maintained throughout the country.

The first act of the new régime was to hunt down that stalwart prop of the Palace, Ibrahim Pasha, and after a long chase all the way from Damascus, he was at last run to ground in his citadel of Viranshehir, and his power utterly broken, himself dying of dysentery two days later. The tribes under his immediate sway were looted with great cruelty by their neighbours, but the Government attained their object of ridding the country of a grave and standing danger.

It is extraordinary to note how, simultaneously with the disappearance of the Palace rule, there was an almost complete disappearance of the desperate Armenian complaints from the distant provinces. The Kurds no doubt saw, from the fate of Ibrahim, that the new Government was not to be trifled with, and once they had ascertained the nature of the orders which the authorities were receiving from Constantinople, they ceased in a trice from their misdeeds. Indeed, in some place, the Armenians, elated by their new gained freedom, assumed an attitude and airs which were, to say the least, provocative, but the councils of emissaries of the Committee of Union and Progress, and probably also the exhortations of Mgr. Ismirlian, the Armenian Patriarch, were successful in checking excesses either on one side or the other. Very large numbers of Armenians began to return to their homes, many coming across the frontier from Russia, and others from different countries to Constantinople.

The places where, according to the reports I have received, the Constitution was least well received, were Kharput and Diarbekir, but even from these vilayets no outrages have been committed, although there still appears to be a strong feeling of uneasiness among the Christian population. Also, it is a little early to place too great hopes upon the durability of the good efforts now being made by the local authorities in the more remote districts of the Empire.

It has been decided to send a Commission through Anatolia to examine into the administration, the complaints of the people, and the state of public security, but for various reasons it has not yet started. Its results should be productive of considerable good.

The main difficulty at the close of the year appeared to be not the prevention of further attacks by the Kurds on Armenians, but the restitution by the former of property they had taken from the latter. It is desirable that they should make such restitution, but to have attained the first point is to have achieved very much.

Smyrna.

There is little to relate concerning the province of Aidin during the past year up to the moment of the proclamation of the Constitution. In the celebrations which greeted this event the Greeks made themselves unduly conspicuous and obnoxious, but their Moslem fellow countrymen failed happily to take offence at their demeanour. The prisons were thrown open and thus over 3,000 criminals were let loose upon society. The prison at Smyrna was destroyed and its site turned into a public garden. The military commandant, Tewfik Pasha, fled, but was arrested at Konia, and other officials of the old régime were degraded and dismissed.

The next form which liberty assumed was strikes. The stevedores, lightermen and porters commenced the movement and gained their demands, their example was followed by the carpet-dyers and weavers. It was then the turn of the workers on the Aidin Railway. Three agreements were come to between the Delegates of the men and the Company, but all fell through. The members of the Committee of Union and

Progress, who were, *de facto*, the governors of the place, showed great weakness, and while the Vali's responsibility remained his authority was gone.

On the 13th September an arrangement was come to by which the men gained the following concessions; 15 per cent. increase on salaries up to 500 piastres a-month, and 10 per cent. on salaries above this; a ten hours' working day, except for the three winter months, when the day is nine and a-half hours (instead of ten and a-half throughout the year); day labourers to be employed by the month after five years' service; those on the general staff not to be dismissed for lack of work; the questions of insurance and pensions to be considered.

After about a week's work the strike began anew for the fourth time. But on this occasion the Company was determined and the authorities were weary with the unreasonable conduct of the men and no further concessions were made. A show of force and the energetic action of the English employés on the railway overawed the strikers, and on the 7th October the matter came definitely to an end.

The disadvantages of the division of authority between the officials and the Committee grew increasingly manifest, and the bands of brigands which infest the Aidin province became as numerous as ever. The Vali, Raouf Pasha, was inefficient, the law courts inactive, and the police indifferent. I called the serious attention of the Minister of the Interior to this state of things, and as the interference of the Committee, once the elections were over, began to disappear, so the authority of the Vali increased, while the injunctions sent from Constantinople undoubtedly had a satisfactory effect. Vigorous measures were taken to cope with brigandage, and during the month of December order and tranquillity appear to have been to some extent restored.

Samos.

The unsatisfactory state of the Island of Samos during the last two years is shown by the fact that during that short space of time five Governors have succeeded one another; after the cessation of the troubles which took place at the end of May the conviction was expressed by a number of independent and reliable persons, including the British, French and Italian Consular agents in the island that the Senator Sofoulis was not only the chief cause of the actual outbreak, but also with his colleague Hadjidaki responsible for the ferment culminating in the events of May.

The history of the troubles may be shortly related as follows: Georgiadis Bey, who had only been appointed in September 1907, aroused the hostility of the Samians by the attitude he adopted in refusing to consult the Senate in matters affecting the appointment or removal of certain judicial functionaries as also police and gendarmerie officers, basing himself on the Supplementary Firman of 1854; the result was that by the beginning of the year an absolute deadlock had ensued. For a moment the Sultan entertained the idea of despatching troops to Samos to support the Governor; he, however, privately asked the advice of Sir Nicholas O'Connor, who said that the tactless attitude of the Governor was partly accountable for the situation which had arisen and advised the appointment of Copassis Bey, who might be hoped to tide over the present difficulties until the next election in the island, when the opposition was likely to come into power. This advice was followed, and Copassis Bey took up his duties about the middle of January. For some time all went well, but in the early spring the Prince Governor made a tour in the interior of the island in the course of which he convinced himself that M. Sofoulis had very few supporters outside Vathy, and that by the display of a little firmness he could destroy his influence, which, judging from the various reports which reached this Embassy after the outbreak, had had a most baneful effect. The pretext for the trial of strength between the Prince and the party of Sofoulis was the demand of the Senate that the Assembly should be convoked at Vathy on a certain date, though the right of fixing the date and place of its convocation is expressly vested in the Prince. There was also a somewhat obscure dispute regarding the manufacture of cigarettes, in which a German subject was involved. The Prince, who was powerless against Sofoulis, who had the support of the

local gendarmerie, which he was accused of having illegally increased by enrolling some 200 smugglers and riff-raff, appealed to the Government for reinforcements, and 200 troops were dispatched to the island. On their arrival on the 25th May, after Sofoulis had made a vain endeavour to induce the Prince to send word to the officer to withdraw, they were received by the gendarmerie and the supporters of the Senate with a heavy fire and a number of them were killed. Meanwhile an attack was made on the Prince, who was seized, grossly insulted, and dragged to the Senate, whence he managed to escape on the advance of the troops. After this he was besieged with some 200 troops in his Palace for two or three days in the course of which two vehement attacks were repulsed. On receipt of this serious news the Imperial Government acted with surprising promptitude, troops were dispatched from Smyrna and elsewhere, and a naval detachment arrived on the 28th May. Some resistance was offered by the rebels necessitating a bombardment of the heights above the town, but very little damage was done in the town itself. The troops behaved on the whole excellently, though there was a little looting, in spite of circumstantial reports that a number of Turkish troops who had surrendered at the time of the first fighting had been massacred and mutilated. Order was very promptly restored. It was some time before many details of the troubles reached this Embassy, and meanwhile the Greek Government were making representations to the Foreign Office, and MM. Sofoulis and Hadjidakis, who had wisely escaped to Athens, were bombarding the British, French, and Russian Legations with all kinds of charges against the Prince and accusing the troops of killing a large number of women and children. It eventually transpired that five women and children had been killed, and that the troops and insurgents each lost about thirty killed and fifty wounded.

In these circumstances positive assurances were obtained from the Porte that the troops would be reduced to the usual number, (*i.e.*, two companies), as soon as order had been restored, and that no attempt would be made to alter the organic statute of the island without the consent of the three Protecting Powers. The Porte's undertakings were scrupulously carried out, and quiet was restored by the middle of June.

General Condition of the Provinces.

The result in the provinces of the re-establishment of the Constitution has the appearance of being surprisingly beneficent. But if we attentively reflect how much swifter is the progress of corruption than its cure, and if we remember that the years abandoned to public disorder, and to disregard of law, exceed the weeks allowed to the development of constitutional methods, and that this development has been unceasingly hampered by external complications, we must admit that the short interval of time that has elapsed is altogether insufficient for the arduous work of reformation.

While welcoming the temporary amelioration which, for the time, is evident in the condition of the provinces, and while hoping that it may prove to be the commencement of a better era, yet I am unable to acquire the conviction that the abuses of the past are already for ever abolished, or that the memory of unpunished licence on the one hand, and of unmitigated suffering on the other, is thus at a stroke obliterated.

II. EFFECT OF YOUNG TURKISH REVOLUTION ON THE GREAT POWERS.

[*ED. NOTE.*—On the 21st July Russia presented to Great Britain a lengthy memorandum on gendarmerie and judicial reform just before the outbreak of the Young Turkish Revolution. This began on the 23rd July and ended the schemes of judicial, financial and gendarmerie reform. The first step taken by the British Government was in the following telegram :—

No. 212.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

F. 26167/6/08/44.

Tel. (No 274.)

Mobile force.

Foreign Office, July 27, 1908.

In view of marked improvement of the situation in Macedonia caused by the inactivity and reported disappearance of the bands, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are of opinion that it would be desirable to suspend any representations to the Porte for the creation of a mobile force, so long as tranquillity prevails and an earnest effort is made by the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t to preserve it.

Ask M. Isvolsky if he concurs, in which case we will express this opinion to other Powers.

On the same day a telegram of congratulations on the reforms was sent by the British Government to the Grand Vizier and Sultan. Russia issued a circular on the 29th July advocating the suspension of reform for the time being. Austria-Hungary acquiesced and gave her gendarmerie officers indefinite leave of absence before the end of August. A similar policy was pursued by other Powers and embodied in an identic note to the Porte, presented on the 3rd October. This is printed in *A. & P.* (1909), CV, (*Cd.* 4529), pp. 1043-1044. It was accepted by the Porte in December, *ib.* pp. 1058-9.

A few despatches illustrating the effects upon various Powers are here given.]

No. 213.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 26628/6/08/44.

(No. 40.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, July 28, 1908.

M. Stancioff told me to-day that he did not think the Turkish Constitution would last. It was a military movement, caused largely by the young officers who did not receive pay and who were not allowed to speculate. The Civil functionaries and persons in higher positions generally could speculate in Turkey: but young officers in the army were an exception. In his view, soldiers did not make Constitutions, and he therefore did not believe that Turkey was now launched on a new era of free Constitutional Government.

I replied that any improvement in the Government in Turkey would be a great change for the better; and I could only repeat what I had said in Parliament last night, that we must wait and see what happened.

M. Stancioff asked whether I had intended to imply last night that representations were about to be made by the Powers to Greece and the Balkan States about the bands in Macedonia.

I told him that from what I had heard the bands appeared to have melted away, and all I had meant to do was to urge that the Governments of the Balkan States should do their best to prevent the bands from being revived from outside. I admitted that of late it was the Greek bands which had been the worst; but whenever we had known bands to be forming we had made representations to the Governments concerned.

M. Stancioff said he hoped it was not the case that the Powers were going to drop the Macedonian question.

I replied that, as I had said last night in Parliament, we should continue to watch the question as closely as ever. I agreed that it was not settled by the mere announcement of a Turkish Constitution, and we ought to judge by results. But for the moment, at any rate, the situation was very much improved; and if the Turks were really going to establish good Government on their own initiative, we should certainly do all we could to assist them. M. Stancioff might rest assured that we should not disinterest ourselves in the question of Macedonian reform.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 214.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir Gerard Lowther.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Lowther,

Foreign Office, August 11, 1908.

I am much obliged for your letter of the 4th.

I should say as little as possible to the Khedive about a constitution for Egypt. If Turkey settles down to a free and enlightened Government, it must have a great effect in Egypt and upon our policy there. But for the moment all we can say is that we want to see what is going to happen in Turkey and that the development of representative institutions in Egypt will continue to receive constant consideration. That it is receiving it, is proved by the fact that a step is already being taken in connection with provincial Councils, which Gorst has discussed with the Khedive. You might add that no doubt the whole subject will be carefully discussed by me with Gorst before the latter returns to Cairo, but that for this month at any rate he and I are separated on much needed holidays. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter is already printed above, p. 266, No. 207.]

No. 215.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 28447/6/08/44A.

(No. 360.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. August 13, 1908.

Sir,

R. August 17, 1908.

M. Iswolsky received me this afternoon on my return to St. Petersburg, but our interview was of short duration, as His Excellency had been summoned to Peterhof. In our conversation we touched on several topics, but, as time was limited we could not enter thoroughly into any subject. He asked if I had read his circular note to the Russian Representatives in regard to Macedonian reforms.⁽¹⁾ I told him that having only just arrived I had not been able to look into any papers, but I understood that he had considered it advisable in view of the new situation in Turkey to suspend any further action for the present. He replied that this was the case, and that he was glad to find that His Majesty's Government were of one mind with the Russian Government in waiting for the future development of events. In

⁽¹⁾ [Dated 25 July (Old Style). Austria-Hungary accepted it in principle on the 18th August.]

all matters he desired to work in full accord with His Majesty's Government and he trusted that this was recognized in London. I gave him assurances on that point; and I added that with the whole Eastern world in a process of fermentation, it was most desirable that the two Powers most directly interested in Eastern affairs should be in close and intimate intercourse. He remarked that of course it was impossible to foresee the consequences of the unexpected revolution in Turkey, full as it was of unknown elements and forces. He could express no opinion beyond stating that abstention from all intervention and careful watchfulness were essential.

He considered that the necessity of suspending further action both in the British and Russian reform projects was not an unwelcome fact. He thought that it would have been found difficult to move Austria-Hungary to a hearty and cordial acquiescence, and he would tell me frankly that he was perplexed and suspicious in regard to the policy of the Vienna Cabinet. He did not believe all the reports which had either been published or had reached him in respect to secret understandings between Vienna and Constantinople, but he could not banish from his mind doubts, which he would willingly not entertain, as to the honesty and disinterestedness of Austrian policy. Whatever schemes may have been planned and whatever arrangements might have been prepared, the bewildering change which had swept through European Turkey and Constantinople had necessarily carried away with it, in any case for the time, all political combinations and projects. He asked what I considered would be the probable future in Turkey. I told him that it would be rash to prophecy; but I had misgivings. Every one must sympathize with a movement which aimed at terminating an execrable régime and if peace and happiness could be restored in the Turkish Empire and if the various races under Ottoman dominion were to enjoy full liberty and equal rights with the dominant race all would be well. But it seemed to me that the "Young Turks" after they had obliterated the evils of the past would have to construct a new system, and I doubted if they would find it possible to really accord to the Christian population a fair share in the Government, and I questioned if the Christians would in fact find that Islam had so entirely abandoned its traditional attitude towards them that they could rest perfectly contented and secure as subjects of a Mussulman Power even if it professed enlightened and liberal views. The future was still obscure and uncertain.

M. Iswolsky remarked that the "Young Turks" would doubtless use their best endeavours to obviate the risk of any European intervention, and that this was perhaps a good guarantee in favour of the Christians. He then passed on to certain Afghan matters which perhaps it would be preferable to report in a separate despatch.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 216.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 28480/23627/08/44A.

(No. 348.) Confidential.

Sir,

Homburg, D. August 13, 1908.

R. August 17, 1908.

In the conversation which I had with the Emperor on the evening of the 10th Instant, His Majesty [The Emperor William II] referred to the recent events in Turkey, which he considered were directly attributable to the visit paid by the King to the Emperor of Russia at Reval. On my expressing my astonishment that this should be the case, His Majesty explained that the Young Turk party feared that

⁽¹⁾ [For views of German diplomats, see reports of Count Metternich of August 14, 1908, *G.P.* XXV, II, pp. 600-8, and of Baron von Marschall of August 28, *id.*, pp. 608-9, 3-4 September, 1908, *id.*, pp. 612-26.]

a close understanding between England and Russia might lead to the imposition of Reforms in Macedonia by foreign agency. This they were determined to resist, and, thinking that the Sultan might yield to the pressure which the two Powers would put upon him, decided to take action at once. The movement, which had been very carefully organised on a military basis, was directed, not against the person of the Sultan, but against his *entourage*, and was entirely successful. The Sultan, seeing that he was unable to oppose the movement, had put himself at the head of it and had thereby acquired considerable popularity. The Emperor went on to say that he understood that the majority of Diplomats at Constantinople did not believe in the existence of public opinion in Turkey as a Power which need be taken into consideration. Baron von Marschall had however frequently pointed out that it was a factor which had to be counted with, and that it was powerful enough to compel the Sultan to draw the sword sooner than yield to the demands of the Powers which would have the effect of placing Macedonia under foreign control. Events had proved that Baron von Marschall was perfectly right, although no doubt the movement broke out sooner than he anticipated.

On my observing that it would be far more satisfactory if the reforms in Macedonia could be brought about by the Turks themselves, rather than by the action of the Powers, the Emperor replied that this was certainly the case, but he thought that the fact of Turkey becoming a Constitutional State would have a far-reaching effect on other Oriental countries, and that His Majesty's Government might find themselves in a position of some embarrassment when, as was likely to happen, India and Egypt would put forward a claim for a Constitutional form of Government.

I have communicated the substance of the Emperor's remarks to Sir Charles Hardinge who said that His Majesty's Government were closely following the progress of events in Turkey, and were fully alive to the importance of the change which was taking place in the condition of affairs in the East.

I have, &c.

FRANK C. LASCELLES.

No. 217.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 30047/30047/08/38.

(No. 364.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 14, 1908.

R. August 31, 1908.

The Emperor was pleased to accord me a private audience at Peterhof yesterday afternoon, and I had the honour of a lengthy conversation with His Majesty.

After referring in cordial terms to the great pleasure which the visit to Reval in last June had afforded him, His Majesty proceeded to speak on various questions of immediate interest. His Majesty dwelt at some length on the surprising events which had recently occurred in European Turkey, and while expressing his sincere desire that the transformation which had burst upon the world so suddenly would lead to a new era of prosperity and tranquillity to all the races of the Ottoman Empire, he did not consider that it would be wise to assume with certainty that all difficulties and dangers had passed away and that Moslem and Christian would live together peaceably and contentedly enjoying equal rights in a fraternal spirit. A fair trial should certainly be given to the new system and an attitude of sympathetic watchfulness should be adopted; but the situation was too complicated to admit at this early stage of perfect confidence in the future. He could tell me very confidentially that he had sent a message to the Sultan through M. Zinoview, who was returning to his post, to the effect that a man of honour never broke his word. He wished the Sultan to understand that the Constitution which he had

whose barracks are on this side of the Golden Horn began to return through Pera firing as they marched, and on reaching their quarters at Taxim and Tashkishla and in the direction of Yildiz they again gave vent to their joy by wild fusillades which were answered in like fashion from the barracks on the opposite shore of the Bosphorus. The volleys ceased by 3 A.M., but the native Christian population for the most part ignorant of what had occurred passed an anxious night, and some few individuals took refuge in European houses.

The real state of affairs was of course known very early on Wednesday morning and confidence was so far restored that the shops in Galata and Pera, which had mostly been closed the previous afternoon, were opened. Firing in the air continued, however, intermittently throughout the day and early in the afternoon the shutters were again up, though the streets were crowded with apparently unconcerned spectators. During the course of the day the offices of the Tanin and Shura-i-Ummet and of the Committee of Union and Progress were looted while the Women's Club was closed, and except in the early part of the day communications with Stamboul were discouraged.

In the afternoon Tewfik Pasha succeeded in forming his Cabinet which was composed as follows :

Grand Vizier	...	...	Tewfik Pasha.
Minister of War	...	...	Marshal Edhem Pasha.
President of the Council	...	...	Zihni Pasha.
Minister of Foreign Affairs	...	...	Rifaat Pasha.
Minister of Finance	...	...	Nouri Bey.
Minister of Marine	...	...	Emin Pasha.
Minister of Justice	...	...	Hassan Fehmi Pasha.
Minister of Agriculture	...	...	Mavrogordato Effendi.
Minister of Interior	...	...	Adil Bey (<i>ad int.</i>).
Minister of Public Works	...	...	Gabriel Effendi Noradounghian.
Minister of Evkaf	...	...	Halil Hamada Pasha.

Of these Zihni Pasha resigned within 24 hours, as did also Emin Pasha, who was refused admittance to the Admiralty by the sailors, and Admiral Arif Hikmet Pasha has replaced him.

On Thursday morning there was complete tranquillity, though a certain uneasiness obviously existed, and in Stamboul many places of business remained closed.

Generally speaking the behaviour of the troops was excellent, and not a single case of pillage or serious disorder has come to my knowledge. Indeed special precautions appear to have been taken by the leaders of the movement to maintain order, for the ordinary civil police were often accompanied by soldiers to support their authority. One curious incident is worth relating in this connection. When on Tuesday morning a party of troops passed through Galata on their way to join the mutineers in Stamboul they stopped at the Imperial Ottoman Bank and insisted that the rifles kept at the Bank should be delivered to them. They promised that the weapons should be returned in a few hours, a promise that was scrupulously kept, every single rifle being faithfully delivered the same afternoon.

It was inevitable that with the immense amount of promiscuous firing a certain number of accidents should have taken place, but so far as I can ascertain, the deaths from that cause have been comparatively few. The political murders, however, would undoubtedly have been numerous but for the promptitude with which those who thought they had anything to fear took to flight or went into hiding. How many officers have been assassinated it is impossible to say. The Bulgarian Military Attaché who is likely to be well informed, has told Colonel Surtees that he knows of two hundred such murders, but I am disposed to think this number exaggerated and I am confidently assured that not more than thirty-five officers have

lost their lives. A few unfortunate individuals were killed, some owing to mistaken identity. Such were the Minister of Justice, Nazim Pasha, mistaken for Ali Riza Pasha, the ex-Minister of Marine, and the Emir Mohamed Arslan, Deputy for Latakia, who was believed to be Hassan Djahid Bey, the editor of the *Tanin*. His death has caused much excitement at Beirut, where his family possesses great influence. Captain Bettelheim, who was in the company of the unfortunate Emir, also was severely handled by the soldiery under the impression that he was Ahmed Riza Bey, President of the Chamber, and owed his life to the presence of a Gendarme who could vouch for his identity.

But though a Cabinet had at length been formed it is not an exaggeration to say that for the past thirty-six hours after the events of the 13th the only real authority in the capital was that of the Sultan. It is therefore not surprising that on thursday rumours circulated that the rising of the troops had been engineered from the Palace and that the real author of the *coup* was the Sultan himself. It was pointed out that the soldiers were well provided with money—each man of the 4th Avji battalion, which began the movement, was said to have received £T. 5—and that the hafiés—Palace spies—were again at work, and the fact that the Sultan had issued a complete pardon to the mutineers was adduced as a proof of his Majesty's complicity. The fact that money was found on the troops does not necessarily mean that the money came from the Palace. The troops have recently been regularly paid and it is their habit to save for the day of their return to their homes, and they necessarily carry it with them.

What part the Sultan had previously taken or was at that moment taking is still open to question, but it may be readily accepted that the malcontents and reactionaries, who are numerous, should have taken advantage of the opportunity to increase the confusion and panic in the hope of discrediting the new order of things, and also that the friends of the Committee of Union and Progress should try to rally public opinion to their aid by raising the cry that the Constitution was in danger. At all events the accounts which they sent to the provinces were the most barefaced distortions of the truth and represented what in its inception was a party movement against the Committee as a deep-laid scheme of the reactionaries to abolish the Constitution. The Government endeavoured in vain to counteract these manœuvres and to restore confidence by issuing manifestos that the Constitution was in no way impaired, and pointing to the fact that the Chamber was sitting as usual, while the Ulemas, in the hope of undoing the mischief wrought by the hodjas and softas among the soldiery, published a declaration affirming their fidelity to the Constitution. The document (translation enclosed),⁽²⁾ is a remarkable one. After alluding to the fear that the Constitution was in danger, it states that the Ulema who have never doubted that there is nothing in it incompatible with the Sheri Law, and who have not forgotten the destruction of the sacred books of Gulhané under the autocratic régime, will join with the Deputies and soldiers in defence of the Constitution and are ready to sacrifice their lives in the cause. The Deputies must therefore resume their duties in the Chamber and those who fail to do so, or resign, will be considered as traitors. The proclamation ends by an appeal to the soldiers to return to their discipline. But if the city remained calm, this was the only result obtained, for the soldiery continued to disregard their officers as before, even if, as is said, the murder of officers was not still going on. The leading members of the Government and Nazim Pasha, the Commander of the 1st Army Corps, professed the greatest optimism, but nevertheless great uneasiness prevailed, and I do not think that at any previous moment there had been so near an approach to panic among the Turks as on Friday afternoon. The Committee's partisans feared assassination before help from Salonica could arrive, while the liberals and others—even neutrals—were terrified at the news from Salonica, and both were apprehensive of a move on the part of the Sultan. Four naval officers

(2) [Not printed.]

including the late Minister of Marine, Arif Pasha, took asylum on board H.M.S. "Imogene," but I was able to arrange promptly for their transfer to a British vessel that was leaving the port. Mahmoud Moukhtar Pasha, the Commander of the 1st Army Corps, took refuge in an English house and narrowly escaped with his life, the house being surrounded by large numbers of soldiers. The news from the European provinces was indeed sufficiently serious. In all the more important military centres in European Turkey Adrianople and Uscub alone excepted, the telegrams showed that the recent events in Constantinople were regarded as a *coup d'état* against the Constitution and that the troops were preparing to start for the Capital. At Uscub and Adrianople, even, the soldiery seemed only to be awaiting further news, while from Asia Minor the chorus in support of the Constitution was almost equally unanimous. The same evening two battalions actually left Salonica and the local authorities and Committee of Union and Progress took possession of the Salonica-Demotika railway. Thinking that I might do something to calm the popular excitement by disseminating the actual facts as widely as possible, I sent a circular to His Majesty's Consular Officers informing them briefly of what had occurred, and leaving it to their discretion to use it in the best way. I do not think however that much result was produced, for the inflammatory manifestoes of the Committee of Union and Progress had been first in the field, and precautions had also been taken by that body to prevent the circulation of news and papers from Constantinople. The proclamations of the Government and Chamber, telegraphed to all the provincial authorities were equally ineffectual and appear not to have delayed the march of the Salonica and Monastir troops on Constantinople for an hour.

On Friday, as the Chamber was not sitting a meeting of some forty Deputies of all parties met at a restaurant in Pera and decided to send deputations to the various centres to explain that there was no ground for alarm for the safety of the Constitution but the next morning it was realized that it was already too late for such action, and only a single party actually left, whose task it was to meet the troops that were expected at Chatalja from Salonica. Nazim Pasha who had been appointed Commander of the 1st Army-Corps was very confident that some compromise might be arrived at, but the deputation totally failed in its object, and was not even allowed to return to Constantinople. One of their number, a hodja on whom a revolver and papers proving his complicity in the revolt were found was beaten. A second deputation headed by Izzet Halil Pasha the Grand Master of Artillery was equally unsuccessful, but was permitted to return, two native journalists who accompanied him being however detained. The utmost result obtained was an assurance that the troops would not enter the Capital so long as they were satisfied that no preparations for resistance were being made. I think it probable that at this time the leaders of the Salonica troops had formulated no demands but it was generally believed that being quite assured of the safety of the Constitution, they were insisting on the reinstatement of the late Cabinet, the punishment of the murderers, and other similar demands. Meantime troops continued to arrive at Chatalja, where the forts had been abandoned by the garrison artillery who marched straight to Constantinople and were graciously received at Yildiz. By this time the Government were convinced that the Roumeliot troops meant to occupy the town and so alarmed were they at the prospect of a collision between the troops that they sent Rifaat Pasha to request me to allow Mr. Fitzmaurice to accompany a delegation of Deputies to Chatalja. The Minister for Foreign Affairs said it was the unanimous belief of the Cabinet that the Committee's forces would more readily credit the statement that there was no attack on the Constitution if made by a foreigner, and that an Englishman would carry special weight, and he and all his Colleagues earnestly hoped I would not refuse. I felt that I could not decline to take any step which might contribute to avert a collision with all its unknown consequences, and with some reluctance, for I feel very strongly how undesirable it is that the Embassy should be drawn into any

kind of interference, I agreed to the Minister's request. However when Mr. Fitzmaurice reached Stamboul he found that other counsels prevailed and that it had been decided that the Deputies should go alone. The Deputation fared no better than its predecessors, and indeed failed even to obtain a hearing. The fact that determined the Committee leaders was the rallying to their side of the Adrianople troops. For two days there had been considerable hesitation, but a meeting of the officers of that garrison held on Saturday afternoon at the military club had ended in a decision to throw in their lot with the Committee, and thus the force on which the Turkish Ministers had counted as a check on the action of the Committee was turned against themselves. On Sunday the combined forces from Adrianople and Salonica commanded respectively by Salih and Husni Pashas (the latter the uncle of the prominent Committee man Rahmi Bey) had advanced to Sparta Koulé, some twenty miles from the walls of Stamboul, and had an advanced post of 650 men at Kutchuk Tchekmedji, 10 miles nearer. The main body was nearly eight thousand strong and included cavalry and artillery. Their discipline was described as perfect. The intention of their leaders appeared to be to wait till they had collected a sufficient force to overcome any possible resistance and then impose their will on the Government. On Sunday evening the Government made a last attempt at reconciliation and sent the chief of the Staff who is supposed to be favourably regarded by the Committee to try to open negotiations, but the attempt was fruitless and Izzet Pasha returned on Monday morning.

The same day I received the news from His Majesty's Vice-Consul at Uscub of a movement among the Albanians that may cause the Committee some uneasiness. It was to the effect that the Committee of Union and Progress at Salonica had refused to receive a deputation which the Albanians of Uscub desired to send to Salonica to ascertain for themselves how matters really stood, and that the Albanians were thereupon sending the Deputy for Prishtina, threatening that if his report was not satisfactory, 100,000 Albanians would march on Salonica at once. A Despatch received by post from Mr. Vice-Consul Satow shows that the situation at Constantinople has been perfectly well understood at Uscub and that there is considerable feeling among the Albanians against the Committee.

On Monday afternoon it was publicly believed that the Committee had demanded the abdication of the Sultan and were preparing to carry out their intention by force if necessary, and so strong was the conviction that Yildiz would be attacked in the early morning that the villages of Beshiktash and Ortaköy in its immediate neighbourhood were to a large extent deserted by their inhabitants. The rumour seems to have been well founded for Ismail Kemal Bey who came to the Embassy on the following morning stated that he had been told by the Grand Vizier that such a message had in fact been received from the Committee headquarters outside the town and had been sent on to Yildiz by the hand of Rifaat Bey, the Sultan's Chamberlain. Tewfik Pasha had further told Ismail Kemal Bey that in a second telegram the Committee were demanding that certain persons whom they considered responsible for recent events should be handed over to them, and among the names were his own (Ismail Kemal's) and Ali Kemal. He had therefore come to let me know that in the interests of peace he had decided to leave the country for a time, and begged that I would allow one of my Staff to accompany him to the Khedivial steamer leaving the same afternoon. I replied that I thought his decision a wise one and agreed to allow Mr. Ryan to see him on board the steamer.

During the night Tewfik Pasha and Edhem Pasha tendered their resignations but these were not accepted. Nazim Pasha and Memdough Pasha also both resigned but are retained. For the two past days Constantinople was practically without a Government for though Councils of Ministers and Conferences at the Palace and Chamber innumerable have been held, nothing has been done for the lack of any executive force. Rifaat Pasha himself confessed as much to me when on the morning of the 20th, he came to inform me of an anonymous letter which he had received

stating that it had been arranged by the Palace that when the Committee's troops entered the town one of the Turkish war-ships moored off Beshiktash should open fire on the Embassies, German, Russian, Austrian and French, which overlook the Bosphorus, so as to bring about foreign intervention. The Government, said His Excellency, are powerless and if you and your Colleagues think this threat serious, your only course is to address the Sultan himself. However my Colleagues whom I was obliged to acquaint with Rifaat's communication are not inclined to treat the matter seriously.

At last on Tuesday afternoon the Salonica troops gave the first public announcement of their objects and designs, in the shape of two proclamations signed by Hussein Husni "Commanding the Investing Army," and addressed to the General Staff of the Army and to the population of Constantinople. The former is the more interesting document as it contains what is clearly intended to be a reassuring message to the lately mutinous troops who are treated rather as the victims of designing agitators than as intentionally culpable themselves. It commences by asserting that there was reactionary movement to subvert the Constitution and that by appealing to the religious feelings of the troops, the latter were induced to mutiny, and so brought dishonour on the immaculate Turkish Army. To wipe out the stain detachments of the 2nd and 3rd Army Corps have come to San Stefano and Kutchuk Tchekmedjé, so that henceforth the Constitution will by the grace of the Almighty be secured. Further, in order to ensure order and to punish the spies and villains whose actions have made 31st of March to the 13th of April a period of black misfortune to the Empire and to restore the honour of the Army, two demands are made:—(1) That the troops in the Capital resume their discipline and take the most solemn oath to observe the most blind obedience to superior orders, and to abstain from all interference in politics in future. (2) that the troops in the Capital shall in no way interfere with the measures to be taken to punish the guilty nor even look askance at the men of the Roumeliot Corps d'Armée whom they should regard as brothers. That lastly they shall denounce to their officers the spies and vile fellows who instigated them to their recent conduct. If these demands are acceded to and the naval and military forces in Constantinople remain passive and obedient while action is being taken no harm whatever will befall them. The document ends by the request that the General Staff will let the garrison thoroughly understand the terms offered, and send a reply as soon as possible. The document addressed to the population is less interesting and not very reassuring for those who have taken part in recent political events. After giving its own version of the late occurrences, Husni Pasha states that it is the duty of the Army to administer an unmistakable lesson to all traitors and malcontents, to prove that there is and shall be no force superior to the Constitution, as founded on the Sacred Law, and to protect and defend the Constitution. No one need fear punishment except the false spies and pretended Ulema and their like, who will be called to stern account for their crimes. All proper precautions have been taken for the maintenance of order and nothing will happen that could trouble the peace of the Ambassadors and strangers.

The document reads ominously for the opponents of the Committee party and for the Sultan, to whom the expression "force superior to the Constitution" obviously refers. A copy of the "Turquie's" French translation of the manifesto is enclosed.⁽³⁾

It is generally thought that these proclamations will have the desired effect and that the garrisons will make no resistance when the Committee's forces eventually enter the city; and as a matter of fact they are not in a position to make any organized opposition.

I have said but little of the work in the Chamber, for though that body has sat as usual and the debates, when they touched on the problem of the day, were not

(3) [Not reproduced as it is already published.]

without interest, it has, so far as I am aware, exercised no influence whatever on the current of events. On Saturday the adjourned proceedings for the election of a President to succeed Ahmed Riza resulted in three candidates obtaining the requisite number of votes. On their names being submitted to the Sultan, His Majesty selected that of Djamil Bey, in whose favour the greatest number of votes was recorded. On Monday after hearing the Ministry's declaration of policy, the House adjourned, having decided to do nothing before Saturday.

The press had rather reflected than led public opinion, and such influence as it has attempted to exert has been on the side of conciliation. But there has been one notable exception, viz., the "Vulkan" the organ of the Mussulman League whose hysterical nonsense has drawn merited contempt on its editor Vehtète Effendi.

I will add that since Friday night, although anxiety at the possibility of fighting between the city garrison and the Committee's forces has always existed in a more or less acute degree, Pera and Galata have resumed normal conditions, and everything appeared to be following its regular course, even to the ordinary drilling of the troops at the numerous barracks, though of course without their officers.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

No. 219.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Lowther,

April 30, 1909.

I cannot feel any sympathy for Abdul Hamid. His reign has been absolute, during it large numbers of his subjects have been massacred, and all his subjects have been rendered more or less miserable by corrupt misgovernment. His rule has been bad for his country in every way, materially and morally. To save his own life and retain power he surrounded himself with a clique of scoundrels, whom he allowed to exploit his country, and he drove good men out of the country, or at any rate out of the government.

Whether the Turks have it in them to put things right is another matter.

I see that you are pessimistic. I was becoming so, on hearing that corruption was creeping into the Committee and the Young Turks. But I cannot help being impressed by the decision, purpose, discipline, and strength which have characterised the leaders of the Army which is now in power. It is clear that we have greatly under-estimated the strength of the force at the disposal of the Committee. Who the Committees are, I do know, and I do not like the idea of an anonymous and irresponsible directing body any more than you do. No doubt they have made plenty of mistakes. But it seems clear to me that the best elements in Turkey are on their side, and we must back up those elements and be sympathetic to them.

Whether the chance of really permanent reform is great or small, we must back the chance as long as it exists, and I should like you to do everything in your power to keep in touch with the best men and to retain their confidence.

I liked Kiamil, because he seemed to me a man of character and honesty, and a fine old fellow, though by all accounts his son appears to be a scoundrel. But there must be amongst the men now in power several of ability and character and good intentions, or they could not have done what they have in the way in which they have done.

I think that during the last three or four months we have let ourselves slide too much into a critical attitude towards the Committee and the Young Turks.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

I hope they have learnt something by recent events. But they have shown that there is real stuff in them, and we must be less critical and more sympathetic.

Yours sincerely,

EDWARD GREY.

If my assumption is correct and the best men are to be found in the Turkish Army, the weakness will be in civil administration: finance, taxation, customs, and so forth. The men who will have control will be apt for military purposes and administration, they will not understand how to reform the Government. Success will depend upon their trusting their own strength and realizing their own deficiencies. Having the power and the force firmly in their hands they should be bold in using foreign advisers in all civil departments, being confident that under a new and strong régime foreign assistance sought and employed by themselves voluntarily cannot lead to foreign control.

I put these views before you, because it seems to me most important that we should be on the side on which there is hope for Turkey, and should concentrate our influence on the advice which is really important.

I hope you also will write freely, when you have suggestions to make and views to put forward.

F. G.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE DISPUTE ABOUT THE ADRIATIC AND NOVIBAZAR RAILWAYS, 1906-8.

Extract from Annual Report for Servia for the Year 1906.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Mr. Whitehead, No. 26 of April 11, 1907,
R. April 27, 1907.)

VIII.—*Railways.*

F.O. 371/328.

41. With the exception of a small narrow-gauge line in connection with certain mines worked by a Belgian Company near the Roumanian frontier, the Servian railways are owned and worked by the State. They extend over about 360 miles, the main line running almost due south from Belgrade to Nish, and there branching off to the Turkish and Bulgarian frontiers respectively. They are moderately managed, and give a fair and slightly increasing return.

42. A considerable increase in the narrow-gauge system is contemplated, and about 300 miles are to be completed or built before 1910 by means of a part of the loan recently concluded. The point of greatest interest in this connection during the past year is the revival of a scheme for a transverse line of normal gauge railway, which it is hoped will some day connect the Danube with a port on the Adriatic, and is usually referred to in Servia as the Timok Valley Railway. The route it would take in Servian territory has been repeatedly surveyed, and, while not easy, presents no absolutely deterrent engineering difficulties. According to the latest ideas on the subject, the line would start from the Danube at Prahovo near Negotin (whence it is hoped that a bridge and a branch line to Crayova will connect it with the Roumanian system), would ascend the valley of the Timok to Zayechar and Kuyazhevat, thence crossing the watershed by a tunnel to Nish, where it would meet the present main line. Continuing across the Morava it would ascend the Valley of the Toplitza to Prokuplje and Kurshumlija, whence it would reach the Turkish frontier on the summit of another watershed, and probably in the middle of a tunnel. Its further course through Turkish territory to Scutari and San Giovanni di Medua, the outlet to the sea at present contemplated, is not so clearly defined, but the general plan is that it should pass Prishtina and Prizrend, and thence either follow the Valley of the Drin, or take a more direct line to the sea, as the engineers may think best. The advantages of the proposed railway from the Servian and even Roumanian point of view are clearly apparent, as it would be the shortest route to the sea for the whole of Servia and for a great part of Roumania. The question of the extension through Turkish territory is, however, beset with political difficulties, and it is more than doubtful whether any portion of the Servian section would be remunerative without such extension. A number of tentative offers have already been made to the Servian Government for the execution of this project. In July 1906, Mr. Alexander Tucker and Mr. Breary, who is associated with him in the Anglo-Servian Syndicate, offered to form a Company for its construction, provided that the Servian Government would guarantee 5 per cent. interest on the invested capital and grant certain rights of mines and forests along the line. The question does not, however, seem to have been mature at that time, and the offer was not entertained. Later in the year Mr. Alfred Stead devoted some time and study to the matter, sending two experienced engineers to inspect the Timok Valley section, where between Ku[n]yazhevat and Nish the greatest difficulties are anticipated. He had been in communication with Messrs. Emile Erlanger and Co., of London and Paris, with a view to their financial support, the condition being that the Servian

Government should guarantee interest on the capital expended on the Servian section. It is believed that a definite offer has also been made by a German firm for the construction of the line, but up to the present no further progress appears to have been made in regard to any of these proposals. As an earnest of the intention of the Servian Government to proceed with it, however, it has been decided that a short extension of the narrow-gauge line from Parachin to Zayetchar, which lies in the course of the proposed railway, should be built with full-sized bridges and tunnels, in order that it may eventually be utilized as a portion of the Timok Valley line.

No. 220.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. G. Barclay.

F.O. 371/328.

(No. 14.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 7, 1907.

The Italian Ambassador spoke to me to-day on the subject of a projected railway through Servia and Albania to the Adriatic. The Italian Ambassador at Constantinople did not think it likely that the Sultan would grant a concession for such a railway, and doubted whether there would be any practical advantage in pressing for it. But the Italian Government would be favourable to the project if there were any chance of carrying it out, and they would be glad to have our views.

I said we had already been approached by the Servian Government on this subject,⁽¹⁾ and we had replied that we were generally favourable to improved means of communication which encouraged trade, and had no objection whatever to this project being put forward. But we could not promise active support until the project had assumed a more definite shape, and until we knew how it would be regarded by the Porte.

The Italian Ambassador said that circumstances might change in future, and even if the plan was out of the question now, it might some day become a practicable one. He asked, therefore, whether I would send you instructions to confer with your Italian Colleague in the event of the question assuming a practical shape and of circumstances being favourable to it.

This I agreed to do.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [v. preceding paper. This scheme was reported from Belgrade to Berlin on 22 Oct., 1906 v. G.P. XXV, II, p. 283.]

No. 221.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/328.

(No. 3.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. January 7, 1907.

R. January 14, 1907.

With reference to my Despatch No. 71 of the 12th Ultimo, I have the honour to report that Colonel Christitch, a retired officer of the Servian Army, called upon me on the 5th Instant and stated that while on a recent visit to Cettinje he had conversed with several Ministers of the Montenegrin Government on the subject of a possible extension of the Antivari and Lake Scutari railway, which is at present in construction and will be about 40 kilometers long, across Montenegro to the frontier of the Sandjak of Novi Bazar, opposite Servia. He said that the Government of Montenegro hoped that if they could succeed in building this line, the Servians would be obliged to abandon their idea of continuing the Timok Valley railway to an Albanian port (which

would never be likely to form part of Greater Servia), especially as the line from Servia to Antivari would be much shorter and would run for only about 100 kilometers through Turkish territory. Colonel Christitch thought it would be very desirable if an English Company could be formed to carry out this project, as Great Britain would not be suspected of having any political aspirations in the countries traversed by the line.

On my pointing out that in the well-known condition of Montenegrin finances and considering the poverty and mountainous nature of the districts through which the proposed railway would run, it was difficult to see how a constructing Company would hope to escape loss, Colonel Christitch replied that the Montenegrin Government intended to make Antivari a free port, and that the Company could be compensated by grants of land there which would be of great value. Once the connection with the Servian and Roumanian railway systems had been effected, there was no reason why this line should not pay as well or better than the much longer one it was proposed to build through Albania, and there would not be the same difficulties with a hostile population.

In a conversation I had with M. Pashitch some days earlier, His Excellency said that he thought the present moment would be a very favourable one for the realisation of the Timok Valley and Adriatic railway scheme if French and perhaps Italian Capital could be induced to join the English in it. He had learnt from Constantinople that the Porte would be much more likely to grant the concession to a French Company than to any other, and if the three Governments would exert their joint influence in its favour he thought the project could be carried out.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

No. 222.

Report by Italian Minister at Cetinje on the contemplated Railway from Antivari to Niš.

(Communicated by Italian Chargé d'Affaires, March 1, 1907.)⁽¹⁾

F.O. 371/279.

(Translation.)

Mr. Minister,

Cetinje, January 23, 1907.

From the first time I had the honour of being received by Prince Nicholas, it was easy for me to perceive that the question to which H[is] R[oyal] H[ighness] most willingly gave his attention and which he evidently had much at heart was that of the future of Antivari and of the junction of that port with the system of the Oriental railways. On all subsequent occasions he returned to this same matter and, finally, he has interested me in recommending it to the favourable consideration of Y[our] E[xcellency]. Mr. Andrea Radovich, ex-Minister of Finance, sent to me by the Prince, then came to see me on two occasions and explained to me at much length the views of H[is] R[oyal] H[ighness] in this regard.

Certain Austrian capitalists, according to what Mr. Radovich told me, are apparently making efforts with the Sublime Porte in order to obtain the concession of a railway following the line Mitrovitza-Scutari-S[an] Giovanni di Medua or, at least, in the case of refusal, Scutari-S[an] Giovanni. Besides this, a Franco-Italian syndicate appear to be working at Constantinople and Belgrade in order to have the concession of a line which, starting from Nish and passing by Pristina and Prisren, would end at S[an] Giovanni. Whenever one or other of these projects

⁽¹⁾ [In the despatch No. 297 of June 14 (R. June 15) Sir F. Bertie reports that the French Government were similarly approached by Montenegro.]

was realised, remarked my interlocutor, irreparable harm would result for Antivari, which would be not less prejudicial for Italy than for Montenegro, since it would preclude all possibility of the development of the Italian undertaking in that port and Montenegro would, besides, be cut off from communication with the interior. It would therefore seem to be urgently necessary to put into shape the plans, discussed for a long while past, of a railway joining Montenegro with the Balkan interior and thus to prevent the realisation of the eventualities feared.

This railway, starting from Antivari, would pass through Podgorizza, Niesic and Andrié, thence through Beráne, Rózai and Mitrovitza, on Turkish territory; it would reach the Servian frontier near Cursciumlje and thence proceed to Nish, a distance of about 400 kilometres with an expenditure of about 120 million francs. Nish then, as the Servian Gov[ernmen]t already intend, would be joined directly with the Rumanian railways and thence with the Black Sea. The immense and rich provinces of lower Russia, Rumania, Bulgaria and Servia would thus be placed in direct communication with the Occident and the Adriatic, assuming in a great measure the commercial function at present exercised by Austria-Hungary and Germany through the medium of the existing direct lines from North to South, and it (? Nisch) would again become the centre of exchanges with the Orient by means of the new direct line from West to East. This line, balancing in part the effects of the railway monopoly of the central Powers, would be indeed entirely favourable to French, English, Belgian and Swiss trade with the Orient and especially so to Italian trade, the opening of the Simplon and the position of Venice predestining that city to become a European port of the very front rank, without counting the other very conspicuous advantages which the industries of the valley of the Po and the agricultural products of the Adriatic littoral would be called upon to enjoy.

The two principal difficulties in the way of this scheme being, however, the certain stubbornness of the Porte, backed up by other governments, and the cost of the work, Mr. Radovich expressed the opinion that the steps to be taken at Constantinople should be shared in to a parallel extent by all the Powers interested and above all by England, and that the necessary capital for the undertaking should be raised in the various States in such a way that the respective contributions would become relatively small. By making the syndicate international it would be possible to face with greater hope of success the difficulties inherent in the project and in any way the opposition of the Austrian capitalists could be neutralised, whilst the energies of the aforesaid Franco-Italian syndicate would become naturally associated with the initiative of the other powers and would be absorbed therein. The substitution of Antivari for the port of S[an] Giovanni would, indeed, have numerous advantages of which it would be to the interest of all the powers to avail themselves. The principal of these would be :—

- (1) to eliminate the objections of a strategic nature which the Porte has always raised to communication between Scutari and the sea,
- (2) to avoid continual dredging work which the port of S[an] Giovanni would require on account of the silting up produced by the Boiana and the Drin,
- (3) to offer an incomparably healthier district,
- (4) to offer in the ample plain of Antivari the security which is indispensable for the accumulation of goods, for the pasturing of beasts in transit, &c., a security which is lacking in the desert region of S[an] Giovanni,
- (5) and above all to facilitate trade immensely thanks to the constitution of Antivari as a free point for at least 15 years past.

Besides these advantages, Italy would have an especial one proceeding from the fact that the port of Antivari is in the hands of an Italian concern,

In the view of H[is] R[oyal] H[ighness] and of Mr. Radovich, Italy would derive the greatest advantage from a combination which, whilst assuring her in point of fact the first economic position, would leave her apparently in the second line during the negotiations, thus sparing her as far as possible suspicions and disagreeable competition on the part of other states. In view of this and in the interest itself of the scheme, the Prince would accordingly propose to invite to Cettigne the British Chargé d'Affaires, Mr. des Graz, who is at present at Rome, and to speak to him about the matter so that he could refer it to his government and then make known their views and wishes in regard to it. H[is] R[oyal] H[ighness] intends to approach in a similar manner the Ministers of France and Russia if they should happen to be back next month and he is keenly desirous that Y[our] E[xcellency] shall give your own interest, in the manner which circumstances may show to be most fitting, to the steps which he is preparing to undertake, and that you shall lend to them, even if indirectly, your indispensable support.

(Sgnd.) CARLOTTI.

No. 223.

Mr. des Graz to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/279.

(No. 5.) Confidential.

Sir,

Cettinje, D. March 4, 1907.

R. March 16, 1907.

I have the honour to report that the Prince of Montenegro sent for me yesterday before leaving Cettinje for the country.

His Royal Highness begged me to convey to His Majesty's Government the message that they had in him a "small but sincere" friend. Neither he nor his people ever forgot their debt to Queen Victoria and the British Government in connection with Dulcigno. He further asked me to say that since he had made the acquaintance, some ten years ago, of Her late Majesty and of King Edward and had learned, by making friends with Englishmen, to appreciate the characteristics of the British nation, he had been a warm admirer of the Royal Family, of the Country and of its institutions. Who could tell, continued the Prince, but that Montenegro might not, at some future date, be of real assistance to Great Britain as Mistress of the Mediterranean.

His Royal Highness then explained that the reason for which he had desired to see me and had suggested my coming to Cettinje now was the project for a Trans-Balkan railway. If that railway did not pass through the Principality joining the Adriatic at Antivari, where, as I was aware, a port was being constructed, it would mean the political and economic death of Montenegro. Through that railway alone could the Country achieve its development, and a check be placed, by employment being found for his subjects at home, on the ever-increasing emigration, principally to America, of Montenegrins in search of work.

The Prince begged me to represent most earnestly to His Majesty's Government the commercial as well as the political advantages—it was hardly necessary for him to specify the latter—which Great Britain would derive from giving its countenance and support to a Trans-Balkan railway running west and east and from securing that British and French Capitalists only should undertake the project.

In answer to a question His Royal Highness did not conceal his opinion that the most determined opposition must be expected from Austria-Hungary, with Germany at her back, as soon as she became aware of a scheme for a railway connecting Serbia through "Old Serbia" with Montenegro and the Seaboard, but he added, without however giving his reasons, that he had some ground for supposing that it might be possible to obtain the consent of the Sultan's Government to the line passing through their territory in the Sanjak of Novi Bazar.

On my further asking the Prince whether there existed any other project for a line to the Adriatic which would not touch Montenegro but would pass it by, he replied that he believed there was such a project—a line from Servia passing through Albania and ending at the Turkish port of San Giovanni di Medua.

His Royal Highness concluded by again begging me to report his request for the support of His Majesty's Government and to recommend it in the most pressing and earnest manner to their attention. He asked me to see the Minister for Foreign Affairs who would give me full information on the subject.

Both my French and Italian Colleagues had confidentially prepared me for the nature of the Prince's communication with regard to which the Russian Chargé d'Affaires is also fully informed.⁽¹⁾

The Communication to the French Government is doubtless on very much the same lines as that made to His Majesty's Government. Comte de Sercey has reported it briefly to Paris pending the receipt of more detailed information which will be supplied to him before his departure on leave at the end of this week.

The Italian Government—and it is thought that the Russian Government will also very probably take the same line—have expressed themselves favourably “in parola” in regard to the projected railway scheme. They have at the same time expressed the condition natural, in view of the relations of Italy with Austria-Hungary with whose commercial and political interests in the Balkans the projected line would clash, that they should remain “in the second line.”

Every care is apparently being taken here to prevent the project from coming to Austrian ears and, as the post is not safe, I shall keep back this despatch and send it from Rome on my return there next week.

I have, &c.

CHARLES DES GRAZ.

(¹) [A further interview on this same subject with M. Radović, the Montenegrin Prime Minister, is reported in despatch No. 9 of 11 March, R. 16 March.]

No. 224.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 371/279.

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 8, 1907.

The Servian Minister came to-day to inform me that his Government had now decided to construct their part of the proposed railway to the Adriatic on the ordinary gauge. The Servian part would be of value locally, but they admitted that their main object in constructing it was that it should form part of a through-route.

The Servian Minister at Constantinople would support the Company which would apply for a concession to make the railway to the Adriatic through Turkish territory, and the Servian Government would enter into communication with the Roumanian Government in order that a junction should be effected with the Roumanian lines by a bridge across the Danube. This bridge was to be some 60 or 70 kilometers lower down the river than was originally proposed, in order to secure on both sides a shorter route. The Servian Minister asked me whether we would support this plan at Constantinople.

I said that we should certainly place no obstacle in the way, because we were favourably disposed to development of communications generally. But, at the same time, this matter was one of more direct interest to some other Powers who were neighbours, and I could not promise to take any diplomatic action without knowing the views taken by the Porte and the other Powers more directly concerned than we were.

The Servian Minister thought a similar communication was to have been made at Rome, Paris, and St. Petersburg, and I said I would enquire whether this had been done and if so what the views of these other Powers were.

The Servian Minister also thought that, during the visit from M. Stancioff to Berlin and Vienna, a plan had been put forward for a Bulgarian railway, to go by Kustendil and Uskub to the Adriatic, and to be joined with the Roumanian lines to the north. This would be a rival project and a longer route.

I said I had not heard of this proposal.⁽¹⁾

He further assured me that he thought relations between Servia and Bulgaria were likely to be satisfactory.

I told him that this would probably depend upon whether the Servian Government succeeded in discouraging the aggression of Servian bands, and he contended that the Bulgarian bands were the more aggressive.

I said my information did not point to this conclusion, but in any case we deprecated aggression on the part of any bands. What we desired was peace in Macedonia, and good relations between the Balkan States. The activity of the bands was the one obstacle to this.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(1) [Prince Bülow heard of it at the end of February, *cp. G.P. XXV, II, pp. 290-1.*]

No. 225.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/279.

(No. 215.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 22, 1907.

R. April 29, 1907.

As instructed in your despatch No. 157 of the 16th instant, I spoke to M. Isvolsky to-day on the question of a Trans-Balkan railway to the Adriatic Sea, and I enquired if the Servian Chargé d'Affaires had mentioned the subject to him. M. Isvolsky said that M. Grouitch had spoken to him on the subject, and that he had replied that he must examine the question before giving any reply. His Excellency added that when he was Minister at Belgrade some ten years ago, the question was then being mooted, and he personally had no great belief in the project ever being realised. It was possible that the Servian Government might construct their portion of the line, but he doubted if the whole would be seriously undertaken for a long time to come. He asked if I had any information as to what Company proposed to finance the line or as to any details beyond those which I had given him. I replied in the negative.

M. Isvolsky said that since his conversation with the Servian Chargé d'Affaires he had given no further consideration to the matter, as he thought that it was a project which in its entirety would be very difficult of accomplishment both on account of physical and financial difficulties.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 226.

Board of Trade to Foreign Office.

F.O. 371/279.

Sir,

Board of Trade, D. May 24, 1907.

R. May 25, 1907.

I am directed by the Board of Trade to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th ultimo (No. 8442) transmitting copies of two despatches from His

[16789]

Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Cetinje on the subject of the various schemes for the construction of a trans-Balkan Railway from Servia to the Adriatic.

It appears to the Board that the question of giving support to such a project on the part of His Majesty's Government is mainly one to be determined by political considerations.

So far as concerns the purely commercial side of the Montenegrin proposals, the information in the possession of the Board does not lead them to anticipate that the line proposed would be likely to be remunerative in the near future without heavy subsidies from the Governments through whose territory it will pass. Nor do they expect much benefit from it, at least at the outset, for British trade, as only a small proportion of the traffic which now enters the Balkan peninsula by the Black Sea and the Danube is likely to be carried more cheaply by such lines, and the increase of trade that could be expected to take place in the near future with the Districts through which the railway would actually pass will not probably be very great.

On the political side of the scheme (which seems more important than the Commercial aspect) the Board do not desire to offer observations.

I am, &c.

ARTHUR WILSON FOX.

No. 227.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 3645/6/08/44A.

(No. 59.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 30, 1908.

R. February 3, 1908.

M. Iswolsky told me yesterday that he was a little vexed at the strong disapproval which the Russian Press had expressed of certain portions of the speech by Baron d'Aehrenthal relating to Macedonia and especially with regard to his mention of the eventual junction of the Bosnian with the Turkish and Greek railway systems.⁽¹⁾ I told His Excellency that I had not yet read the daily summaries of the Russian Press, and I asked him whether the strictures emanated from only one or from several journals. He said that I should read the articles in the "Novoe Vremya," the "Slovo" and the "Russ" journals of very different political views, and I should see that they were unanimous in condemning the projects which Baron d'Aehrenthal had foreshadowed; and had taken the opportunity of attacking the community of action between Russia and Austria-Hungary in Macedonia which he had been at such pains to establish. The Mürsteg [*sic*] agreement was, he knew, unpopular in Russia, but the vehement attacks of the Press at this moment were most unfortunate.

The "Novoe Vremya" considers that the speech of Baron d'Aehrenthal indicates a new departure, which does not take into consideration either the interests of the Balkan nationalities or the obligations of the Mürsteg agreement. The journal continues "while six Powers through their diplomatic Representatives at Constantinople are carrying on a never wearying struggle for the restoration of order and the termination of bloodshed in Macedonia, Baron d'Aehrenthal ascribes the methods of Turkey in Macedonia simply to Eastern quietism. Baron d'Aehrenthal counts in the future on the co-operation of the Ottoman Government in the matter of reform in Macedonia, a co-operation which hitherto has expressed itself in a stubborn resistance to all efforts of the Powers to introduce even the rudiments of law and order, Austria-Hungary proposes to construct lines to connect with the existing railways in

⁽¹⁾ [This is the first important reference to the Austro-Hungarian project of a railway through the Sanjak of Novibazar to Mitrovitza. This project had been originally conceived and even a preliminary survey made in 1874, v. Dr. J. Koetschet, *Osman Pasche*, Sarajevo (1909), p. 76. It was, however, the Servian Danube Railway project which seems to have suggested the Novibazar scheme to Baron von Aehrenthal, v. *G.P.* XXV, II, ch. 187, *passim*.]

the Balkan Peninsula, and which would directly join Berlin with Athens and the Piræus, and further with Egypt and India. This plan has for its ultimate aim the Germanisation of the Near East, and the whole project is the erection of a great Eastern-German Railway to the Mediterranean, advantageous only to Germany and Austria-Hungary and dangerous to everyone else. Baron d'Aehrenthal is apparently living in the moon, and has forgotten that besides Turks and Greeks in the Balkans there are many millions of Slavs. He has also forgotten that an attempt to turn the Balkan unrest to the special advantage of Austria-Hungary is, to say the least, not loyal to his obligations as regards Russia and can meet with neither sympathy nor co-operation from the latter Power. Not only the Slavs inhabiting the Balkans, but Turkey herself probably will be able to estimate to what degree a German railway intersecting her possessions will be of benefit. It will be an iron stake in the body of Turkey."

The "Slovo," a moderate liberal paper, states that it always considered that Russia made a great mistake in concluding the Müsteg agreement, and would sooner or later repent of it. The only point in its favour was that the agreement might have exercised a restraining influence on the schemes of Austria-Hungary which are in direct opposition to Slav interests. The paper continues "We shall see Macedonia in the future intersected by an Austrian railway from Mitrovitza to Uskub, and as simultaneously the Turkish lines are to be connected with the Greek railways via Larissa, Vienna will be in direct communication with the Piræus. It is not difficult to see what influence this agreement will produce on the Slav peoples in the Balkans. If there is anything able to inflame further their burning hostility it is such an agreement. The Balkan Slavs have for a long time past, and not without reason, suspected the Austrians: they hate the Balkan Greeks no less violently than the Turks, and an agreement between these three elements may easily furnish the spark which will set the whole Balkans in a blaze. If this is called pacification, then surely it is an Austrian method."

The "Russ," also a liberal paper, says that Baron d'Aehrenthal has found a strange way of informing Russia that the agreement respecting Balkan matters has come to an end. The construction of the proposed railway will be of advantage only to Austria-Hungary and will be of enormous gain to her both politically and commercially. Baron d'Aehrenthal's declaration on the railway project leads to the conclusion that apparently successful negotiations are being conducted with Turkey on the subject. If this be so, Russia must consider that her hands are freed and the first duty of Russian diplomacy must be a similarly one-sided action with Turkey in a sense opposed to Austria's wishes. The paper says that it will deal more fully on a subsequent occasion with this extremely important event.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 228.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

Foreign Office, February 5, 1908.

. . . .⁽²⁾ The situation on the Turco-Persian frontier is undoubtedly grave and I do not see how it is to be remedied. I enclose to you a copy of a document⁽³⁾ which has been given to me privately showing the amount of war material landed at Beyrout at the end of Dec[ember] and despatched thence to Aleppo for embarkation on the Euphrates. There is enough for a whole corps d'armée and

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [The first part of this letter deals with the Baltic and North Sea Agreements.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced.]

shows that the Turks mean business. I think you had better show this paper to Isvolsky.

As regards the Novi Bazar railway, I must say that I sympathise with the Russian press and I think that Austria is not acting straight in obtaining any important concession from Turkey at a moment when she ought to be exerting pressure in favour of the renewal of the mandates and of the judicial reform scheme. She has asked us for our support in case of need, but it is not at all likely that we shall give it, especially in view of her attitude towards us about Macedonian reforms.

. . . .⁽³⁾

No time for more—

Y[ou]rs ever,
CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽³⁾ [The last part of this letter refers to personal matters.]

No. 229.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 4538/4538/08/44.

(No. 58.)

Sir,

Pera, D. February 5, 1908.

R. February 10, 1908.

I have the honour to report that the Austro-Hungarian Government have recently renewed their demands for the junction of the Bosnian Railway with the Oriental Railway line terminating at Mitrovitza and that an Iradé has just been issued sanctioning the examination of the project and the preliminary surveys.

It is supposed that this concession is designed as a return to the Austro-Hungarian Government for refraining from extreme severity in regard to judicial reform in Macedonia and although I have no confirmation of this idea, the circumstances are certainly suspicious. The penetration of that district of Macedonia which is already most subject to Austrian influence is obviously of considerable political and commercial importance to that Empire, and the success of the scheme while favourably viewed by Germany, is regarded with annoyance and mistrust by Russia and with jealousy by Italy.

My French colleague is also concerned about the matter and called on me to enquire what view I took and what course of action I intended to propose for the consideration of His Majesty's Government.

I replied that the development seemed to me to be a perfectly legitimate one, to which His Majesty's Government could not properly make objection, and which indeed was foreshadowed by the Treaty of Berlin,⁽¹⁾ and that I should therefore abstain from venturing any opinion as to a policy of opposition.

It is however well that you should be aware of the view taken of the arrangement in Constantinople.

I have, &c.

N. R. O'CONOR.

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal Note, unsigned: "Article XXV" (for text, v. p. 412.)]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/398.

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. February 5, 1908.

R. February 10, 1908.

I have the honour to transmit herewith a Memorandum, carefully drawn up by Mr. Gregory, of the statement on Foreign Affairs made by Baron d'Aehrenthal on the 27th ultimo before the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Hungarian Delegations.

As you will see from the Memorandum, the first part of the statement is devoted to a short review of the political events of international importance which took place during last year, the meetings of Sovereigns, the discussions between Foreign Ministers, the arrangements between Great Britain and Spain, France and Spain, Great Britain and Russia, Russia and Japan, and finally the visit of the German Emperor to the United Kingdom. Of all these events he expressed his approval as tending, while in no way acting unfavourably on the position of Austria-Hungary, to diminish the chances of friction between the countries concerned, and thus to consolidate the peace of Europe. He attached special importance to the cordial reception given in England to the Emperor William, and congratulated the personages who direct the policy of Great Britain and Germany on their successful efforts to place the relations of the two countries on a more friendly footing than had been the case during the last few years. This was a matter of great importance to Austria-Hungary on account of her traditional friendship with Great Britain and her close alliance with Germany.

His Excellency was able to give satisfactory assurances with regard to the relations between the Monarchy and Italy, and while admitting that Irredentism was not yet quite a thing of the past, stated that owing to the loyal efforts of M. Tittoni and the Italian Government the influence of the party who professed it was no doubt on the wane, so much so that he anticipated no trouble from that quarter in the future. At the close of his remarks on this subject His Excellency rendered his thanks to the Press of the two countries for having so loyally deferred to the appeal he had made to them last year, and he expressed the hope that also in the future he could rely upon their powerful and intelligent support.

Baron d'Aehrenthal then passed to the friendly relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia and the efforts made by the two Powers in the cause of Macedonian Reform. He stated that these efforts, in so far as the improvement of the finances and of the administration, and the protection of the Christian population against Mussulman violence and ill-treatment were concerned, showed a distinct measure of success; but that on the other hand the war of extermination waged by the Christian population against each other, had, particularly during the last few months, assumed dimensions which could not but cause the greatest anxiety. While attributing this regrettable fact chiefly to the inability of the Bands and Revolutionary Committees to understand the meaning and object of the Reforms initiated by the two Powers, and to the criminal and sanguinary methods by which they strove to carry out their absurd ideas, His Excellency did not fail to administer a rebuke to the Turkish Authorities, whose spasmodic action with regard to the Bands had, in his opinion, largely contributed to the present situation. The Governments of the Balkan States also received their fair share of criticism, as, while acknowledging the "correctness" of their answers to the representations of the Powers with regard to the formation of the Bands in their respective territories, His Excellency pointed out in plain language that these answers were evidently given with considerable mental reservations.

In concluding his remarks on Macedonia, he stated that, notwithstanding all the difficulties, the two Powers were determined to continue in the course they had marked out for themselves, fortified with the conviction that it was owing to their efforts during the last five years that greater complications than those with which they had now to cope had been successfully avoided.

As regards Morocco, Baron d'Aehrenthal stated that as long as the stipulations of the Act of Algeciras and the principle of the Open Door were observed by France and Spain, the Austro-Hungarian Government had no reason to object to the military operations of those Powers.

In a brief reference to the Second Peace Conference at The Hague His Excellency said that if it had not fulfilled the expectations which it had aroused, its work had nevertheless been of considerable value, as a distinct advance had been made towards the establishment of International Law on a Treaty basis.

As regards the Balkan States, His Excellency announced that the negotiations for a Commercial Treaty with Servia had reached an advanced stage, and that he intended to conclude similar treaties with Bulgaria, Montenegro, Roumania, and Greece.

The part of His Excellency's statement which has aroused most interest, and which has met with the greatest approval on all sides is his announcement of a scheme for connecting the existing Bosnian Railway through Seraievo with the Mitrovitza-Salonica line.

You will find the scheme fully dealt with in the accompanying Memorandum, to which a map showing the railway construction in contemplation has been annexed.

In concluding his statement, Baron d'Aehrenthal expressed the hope that the Delegation would gather from his speech that, in his conduct of the Foreign Affairs of the Monarchy, he had faithfully adhered to the principles which had always found favour with the Delegations, viz., the loyal maintenance of existing alliances together with energetic endeavours to build up and strengthen friendly relations with other Powers. "An Austro-Hungarian Minister of Foreign Affairs must never lose sight of the fact that the Monarchy is not only situated in the centre of Europe, but also lies on the threshold of the East, where many grave problems await solution. Our voice in the councils of Europe can only carry the weight which is its due if we ourselves are strong and united, and bearing this in mind I call upon you to give your votes not only for the Budget of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs but also for the very moderate estimates of the Ministry of Marine."

The discussion which immediately followed Baron d'Aehrenthal's statement was on the whole friendly to His Excellency, and many speakers expressed their satisfaction at the conciliatory tone which His Excellency had adopted towards Hungary. There were a few criticisms with regard to Austro-Russian action in Macedonia, and more than one speaker, in commenting on the slow progress made with the Reforms, expressed the opinion that Macedonia would never be pacified until there was a European Governor General nominated and appointed by the Powers. The Minister was also called upon to keep a watchful eye on Moroccan affairs, and do all in his power to see that European complications were not created by a too adventurous military policy on the part of France. The Reporter of the Committee, Count Nikolas Thorotsky, spoke strongly in this sense, and said that Austro-Hungarian diplomacy should be directed to keeping the Powers concerned strictly to the Act of Algeciras. The same speaker called the serious attention of the Minister to the grave consequences which might ensue from the attitude of certain Roumanian statesmen towards the Roumanian Movement in Hungary. He added that he was far from insinuating that this Movement was directly or indirectly supported by the Roumanian Government, but that he did consider that enough care was not taken by the latter to avoid wounding the legitimate susceptibilities of a neighbouring and friendly State. As instances he gave the reception by the King of Roumania of Roumanian refugees from Hungary at the time of the Bucharest Exhibition; the frequent tours made by Roumanian statesmen in Hungary, which, innocent perhaps in themselves, were certainly made the most of by the leaders of the Roumanian Movement; the frequent reception of these leaders by Roumanian Ministers; and, finally, the use in Roumanian schools of geography books, in which Siebenbürgen and the neighbouring districts were marked as a portion of the Roumanian Kingdom.



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Malby & Sons, Lith

Editors' Note. This map, accompanying Mr. Gregory's Memo, has been altered to include the Serbian projected railway from the Danube to San Giovanni Di Medua and the Bulgarian projected railway from Küstendil to Kumanovo.

He concluded his speech by calling the Minister's attention to the continual attacks upon Hungary made in the British, French, and Italian Press.

The remaining speakers in Committee expressed themselves as on the whole favourable to Baron d'Aehrenthal's foreign policy. A translation, by Mr. Gregory, of Baron d'Aehrenthal's reply to the foregoing criticisms is enclosed herewith. His Excellency has still to face the plenary sittings of the Delegations, for which many members of the Committee have reserved their observations on His Excellency's statement.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTES.

The projected Railways are very desirable things in themselves. The objection lies in the Austrian-Hungarian Government having apparently got the consent of the Turkish Government by showing indifference as to judicial reforms in Macedonia.

F.

The proposals for the comm[ercial] training of Consuls are the same as those which I urged upon the Consular Committee which was composed of the present Lord Salisbury (then Lord Cranborne), Sir A. Acland-Hood, Mr. Bonar Law and Sir J. Mackay.

February 18, 1908.

A. L.

Enclosure in No. 230."

Memorandum by Mr. Gregory on Baron von Aehrenthal's "Exposé."

The "exposé" of the Austro-Hungarian policy submitted by Baron d'Aehrenthal on the 27th ult[imo] to the Hungarian Delegation covers a wide field. Taken in order, the subjects discussed are:—Anglo-German relations; the Balkan policy of the Dual Monarchy; reforms in Macedonia; Austro-Italian relations; Morocco; relations between Austria-Hungary, the United States, and Japan; the Second Peace Conference; Austro-Hungarian Commercial policy; railway extension in the Balkan peninsula; and the development of the Austro-Hungarian Consular Service.

Railway Extension in the Balkan Peninsula.

By far the most important point of this "exposé" is the announcement that the Austro-Hungarian Government have requested from the Sultan authorization to study a scheme for linking up the existing Bosnian railway through Seraievo with the Mitrovitza-Salonika line. At present the railway, after passing Seraievo, divides into two branches South East and East, on the one hand to the Turkish frontier at Uvac, and on the other to the Servian frontier at Vardiste. The new proposal aims at continuing the line through the sanjak of Novi Bazar to Mitrovitza, the present terminus of the line from Salonika. There would thus be uninterrupted railway connection between the North of Europe through Macedonia to the Ægean, and thereby to the ports of the South Eastern Mediterranean, and eventually to Egypt and India. Greece would equally benefit from this scheme, should the Sultan consent to the long standing Greek demand for connection between Salonika and Larissa, a demand which is ardently supported by the Austro-Hungarian Government. The effect of the construction of this railway on the Balkan situation would be political as much as commercial. Politically it is felt that the Sanjak railway, by stimulating commercial enterprise in the districts through which it would pass, would draw off the population from their present absorption in the racial struggle, and, by demonstrating the desirability of peace in the interest of trade, go far to mitigate the activity of the bands. A further effect would be to give a decided strategical

advantage in quelling disturbances as well as to provide a means of withdrawing recruits from the influence of the leaders of the Bands. Commercially, the Macedonian railway would be a certain set-off to the opening up of Turkish resources by Germany in Mesopotamia and Asia Minor, which would always be regarded as one of the great achievements of German enterprise, while the justification for the undertaking of the new scheme by Austria-Hungary would be in her position as a Balkan State through her occupation of Bosnia. But there is to be no departure from the traditions of Austro-Hungarian policy, and no territorial aggrandisement is contemplated.

A further proposal would create railway connection with Montenegro by the construction of a line between Cattaro and the Montenegrin Coast. This would necessitate negotiations with Montenegro on the basis of Article XXIX of the Berlin Treaty. . . .⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [The remainder of this is not reproduced as being of no special interest. Enclosure 2, giving Baron von Aehrenthal's published reply to the Hungarian Committee on Macedonian reforms, is also not reproduced.]

No. 231.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 4515/4/08/44A.

Foreign Office, February 10, 1908.

Tel. (No. 45.)

D. 6.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 26. I have today told the Austrian Ambassador that the dropping of the Judicial Reform note and the rejection of our Gendarmerie proposals, while no other proposal of any kind is forthcoming to pacify Macedonia, will produce impression that the Powers are prepared to acquiesce in present state of things in Macedonia and will when known destroy all hope of Reform and produce most unfavourable effect. I have said that these developments in Macedonian reform negotiations coinciding with irade by Sultan in favour of Austrian railway projects make it appear that while we are credited at Constantinople with responsibility for initiating Macedonian Reform proposals, other Powers get concessions from the Sultan by obstructing them. It was impossible to work the Concert on these lines and I regarded the dropping of Judicial Reform proposals under these conditions as a step towards breaking up concert. This will answer M. Iswolsky's question.

No. 232.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 5102/4538/08/44.

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 12, 1908.

Count Mensdorff spoke to me again, to-day, about the Balkan Railway project.

He said that Baron d'Aehrenthal had been disappointed with our answer. What he had contemplated was, not so much that we should give active support at the moment, as that we should be favourable to the project eventually.

Count Mensdorff asked me whether he might take it that we were favourable, in principle, to the project.

I told him that what was in our minds when we gave our reply was the impossibility of giving diplomatic support to a railway project at the very moment when it appeared to us that all the schemes of Macedonian Reforms were being dropped. As to the merits of the proposed Balkan Railway, I had not even looked at the map to see what course it was to follow before giving our reply. But we were certainly favourable to the principle of railway development generally.

My attention at present was, however, concentrated on what I might put under four heads:—

1. The bad state of things in Macedonia, where the outrages of the bands, as compared with those they had committed during the corresponding period a year before, had increased both in number and ferocity;
2. The proposal to drop the Judicial Reforms Note, which, if accompanied by a statement that the Powers were not going to put forward any measure of improvement, would make the situation desperate;
3. The rejection of our Gendarmerie proposals;
4. The fact that no alternative proposal was forthcoming from the Powers.

I did not in the least mind any proposal of ours not being accepted, provided an efficient alternative was put forward and proceeded with. Even, as regards the Judicial Reforms Note, if the Ambassadors had taken the line, at Constantinople, that Judicial Reforms would not touch the urgent evil of the bands in Macedonia, and that therefore for the moment it would be better to suspend the Note, in order to concentrate upon and press forward some really effective proposal for dealing with the immediate evils of Macedonia, that would have been a defensible position. But to drop the Note and put forward nothing was deplorable.

Count Mensdorff urged that, last September, it was we who had delayed the Judicial Reforms Note by taking so long to consider it.

I replied that that was a long time ago, and that for two months, or, I thought, more, Sir N. O'Connor had been ready to sign the Note and had instructions to put aside small differences of opinion, in order not to delay the signature.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 233.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, February 12, 1908.

Benckendorff will doubtless have laid before you fully M. Iswolsky's views in regard to the latest developments of the Macedonian negotiations. M. Iswolsky is much annoyed and indeed distressed with the action of Austria, and spoke to me openly today in respect to what he termed the "sharp practice" of d'Aehrenthal in regard to the railway question. He told me that the latter had characterized the outburst of indignation here at the announcement of Austria's moves in the railway project as a mere passing effervescence. He was surprised that d'Aehrenthal who had spent so many years in Russia, could so misjudge the feeling in this country as regards Balkan questions. If there was one subject on which Russian opinion of all shades was unanimous it was to resist any measure which gave Austria or Germany a privileged position in the Balkans to the detriment of the Slavs. He had had certain indications that Austria would push forward such a project as that of the Novi Bazar railway, but he had not contemplated that this moment would be selected to bring the matter to a head and to obtain the consent of the Sultan thereto.

Now to fill up the cup came the last meeting of the Ambassadors, and the proposal of the German Ambassador, which was tantamount to shelving reforms and playing direct into the hands of the Sultan. He was surprised that the Ambassadors, apparently unanimously, had fallen into line with Baron Marshall; and M. Zinovieff in reply to an enquiry which he had made of him, had stated that he had agreed to recommend Baron Marshall's proposal to the Russian Gov[ernment] in order to avoid throwing the S[ublime] Porte still

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

further into the arms of Germany and of Austria. He expected to receive in a day or two a full report of the last Ambassadorial meeting at Constantinople, and he might then be able to understand more clearly what had passed. At present, so far as he could judge, the reforms and the continuation of the European concert were gravely imperilled. Furthermore he did not comprehend the alacrity and undue haste which the French Gov[ernmen]t had exhibited in notifying Berlin that they approved the proposal of the German Gov[ernmen]t provided the other Powers agreed. Count Pourtales, with ill-concealed satisfaction, had speedily informed him of this step, before he had heard a word from Paris or had been able to consult with the French Gov[ernmen]t. Count Pourtales had given him to understand that the French Gov[ernmen]t had selected Berlin as the sole depositary of their views: but this he had found to be inaccurate: though he could not explain why Nelidoff had not been informed or why the French Minister here had kept his instructions to speak to him for some days in his pocket—and had only disclosed them when he had sent for him. . . .⁽²⁾

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to M. Isvolski's attitude towards Great Britain.]

No. 234.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾
My dear Grey,

*British Embassy, St. Petersburg,
February 13, 1908.*

Since writing my other letter to you,⁽²⁾ I have seen Panafieu, the French Minister here. He tells me that all that the French Gov[ernmen]t have said here, at Berlin, and elsewhere was that if the other Powers agreed they would also rally themselves to Baron Marshall's proposal. Pourtales apparently stated here that the French had conditionally approved the German proposal—not quite the same thing. However you will have received an identic communication and will know the exact terms.

M. Iswolsky cannot conceal his annoyance and displeasure with Austria. He feels that he has been slightly duped: and moreover he was honestly anxious to see the reform projects smoothly launched. His annoyance will naturally disappear in time, and he will not quarrel either with Austria or with Germany: but he will in future be more cautious as to placing great confidence in them: and will be disposed to march as far as he dare with us in all questions. Some consider that the checks which he has received in his Baltic and Macedonian negotiations will cause him to seek for an Embassy abroad. I doubt this, as like all Russians he has moments of great depression followed by a sudden rebound into cheerful optimism. But he must reckon with public opinion here which is very strong and unanimous. When full knowledge reaches the public as to what has recently passed at Constantinople the feeling may become even stronger against continuing to cooperate with Austria: and the public in all matters regard Germany and Austria as one, and is convinced that the latter takes no steps without the sanction of the former.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

⁽²⁾ [i.e. immediately preceding document.]

No. 235 (a).

Extract from Speech by Baron von Achrenthal respecting the Triple Alliance, Macedonian Affairs, and Projected Sanjak Railway.

(Enclosure in Despatch from Sir F. Goschen No. 16 of February 14, 1908,
R. February 17.)

F.O. 5571/6/08/44A.

(Translation.)

. First I must go back to the nature of our alliance with Russia. It dates from the year 1897 and came into existence at the outbreak of the Greco-Turkish war. It was then asserted that Russia and Austria-Hungary had an equal interest in the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Balkans, that both rejected all idea of territorial aggrandisement in the Balkans, and that both States were firmly resolved to respect to the utmost the independence and right of disposal of the Balkan States.

On this principle we have maintained the steadiest and most amicable relations with the Cabinet of St. Petersburg during the last ten years, and when in 1903 the Macedonian troubles threatened the peace in the Balkans, we and Russia, the Powers most nearly concerned, evolved the Müritzsteg Programme which we have since then brought close to realisation. The additional question of railway connection between the Bosnian and Turkish lines which has just raised so much dust, is widely remote from the sphere of our Agreement and the Müritzsteg Programme. The Agreement is the consecration of the principle of the maintenance of the *status quo*, while the linking up of Uvac and Mitrovitzza or of Vardiste and the Servian railways is merely a question of the natural development of trade and commerce. From the moment when the Bosnian Eastern Railways were completed and opened to traffic, the question of railway connection followed as a matter of course—one might say automatically.

We are on the point of establishing commercial relations with the Balkan States; I trust the Commercial Treaty with Servia, in which so many gentlemen are interested, will shortly be concluded. We must aim at securing the most favourable conditions possible for our exports. But our efforts must not be confined merely to obtaining tariff concessions; we must also aim at paving the way, where possible, for new and advantageous routes. We are only doing our duty when we think of our own interests, and there is nothing egoistical in that. I may here inform the Delegation that negotiations took place last year between Bulgaria and Turkey when the Bulgarian Government was interested in railway connection with Kumanovo. I did not hesitate for a moment to support the Bulgarian Government in their efforts to obtain the concession at Constantinople. The negotiations were broken off, but if ever they are instituted again I shall continue my efforts, if requested to do so by the Bulgarian Government, from the general point of view that I attach great importance to good relations between Turkey and Bulgaria. It is also to the interest of the Bulgarian element in Macedonia that the population should be brought back to peaceful work, for I am of the opinion, which is shared by many gentlemen here, that, if new trade routes are created, the population will get many new opportunities for a tranquil commercial activity.

As to the question why we have chosen this moment to bring up the railway scheme, and whether we have previously conducted negotiations on the subject with other States, I would observe that we have negotiated with no one. It is a matter that concerns only Turkey and ourselves. Moreover I cannot admit that we have thereby exercised an unfavourable influence on the policy of reform.

No. 235 (b).

Précis by Mr. Gregory of an Article in the "Neue Freie Presse" commenting on Baron von Aehrenthal's Speech of February 14, 1908.

(Enclosure 2 in Despatch from Sir E. Goschen, No. 16 of February 14, 1908,
R. February 17.)

F.O. 5571/6/08/44A.

(Translation.)

Baron d'Aehrenthal has not concealed the fact that there is a disagreement with the Russian Cabinet. After the manner of most diplomatic utterances which are intended as much for the ears of foreign statesmen as for those of the immediate audience the *tournares de phrase* of to-day's speech suggest a message for M. Iswolsky, and there are clear hints at the latter's complicity in the recent Press campaign against Austria-Hungary. The principal charge against Baron d'Aehrenthal over the Sanjak Railway question is that of disloyalty to the *entente*, and Austria-Hungary, by seeking commercial advantages from the Sultan, is accused of deserting Russia in her energetic attempts to obtain Judicial Reform. Baron d'Aehrenthal met this charge with a highly unexpected and somewhat dry retort not untinged with irony. "But there is no special *entente* with regard to Judicial Reforms!" He then proceeded to clear up some obscure points of recent history. The individual signatory Powers of the Berlin Treaty, he said, expressed their desire to co-operate in Judicial Reforms. This proposal was adopted and the centre of gravity then shifted to the Conference of Ambassadors at Constantinople, and "the special task of the *entente* Powers was then concluded." The proof that the policy of the *entente* has not been shattered by the new railway scheme is that the primary condition to such an event is wanting, viz., the *entente* as regards Judicial Reforms. For even before the Sanjak Railway idea was propounded Russia had already begun to loosen the bonds of the *entente* by transferring the question of reform to the one spot where all European interests converge and clash—the Conference of the Ambassadors at Constantinople. This is what has stultified the Müritzsteg policy, which was equally a blessing to Russia, far more than any scheme for the Sanjak line which in no way affected her. To judge from Baron d'Aehrenthal's speech, the rosy colours of the *entente* have indeed faded. But the speech is particularly important in that it gives the impression that the first small rifts have made their appearance in the Austro-Russian *entente* which has preserved the peace for ten years. Baron d'Aehrenthal has conclusively proved that there is no connection between the Müritzsteg Programme and the railway. M. Iswolsky cannot assert seriously that a short stretch of railway 100 kilometres in length can affect the *status quo* or the independence of the Balkan States or be considered territorial acquisitions. The fury evinced in Paris and St. Petersburg cannot really be directed against this harmless scheme: it must be directed against the *entente* itself. Perhaps the Chauvinistic enemies of the Duma, not for the first time, are seeking an excuse for diverting public excitement abroad. But Austria-Hungary has been true to her trust, and there is nothing in the Müritzsteg Programme that requires her to give up her rights under the Berlin Treaty and leave the line to Uvac a *cul-de-sac* for all time simply because Russia wishes it. She wants the *entente* and is in no mood to pick a quarrel with Russia. But she refuses to be debarred from making the most of her commercial opportunities or to be frightened out of making an honourable use of the rights that have been guaranteed to her.

Her internal difficulties may have led people to forget that she is a Great Power full of vitality and able to defend her interests. Baron d'Aehrenthal, who received much of his political education in Russia, and is far from wishing to harm the Russian Cabinet, nevertheless declines to look on the *entente* as curtailing Russian [*sic*] liberty of action. For, though universally approved, it would be intolerable if it prevented Austria-Hungary from establishing a useful railway connection. No country could put up with such a thing. Austria-Hungary would be placed in the ridiculous position

of being, alone among the European Powers, debarred from all economic advantages in the East. Baron d'Aehrenthal has met the French attacks quietly but firmly. "The Railway Question concerns only ourselves and Turkey," he said. The whole monarchy will approve. But it will ask equally whether these storms are the premonitory symptoms of a permanent coolness between the *entente* Powers. It is certain that the efforts to obtain Judicial Reforms have slackened. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has said most emphatically. "In the matter of Judicial Reforms the special task of the *entente* Powers was concluded." The solidarity which marked the earlier measures has been wanting, and the *entente* has now sustained a serious shock over the Railway Question. Where will it revive and how? Baron d'Aehrenthal makes no disclosure. He confines himself to saying that hitherto Austria-Hungary acted in full accord with Russia and ends with the sigh "It will not always be easy to steer the ship of peace through all the rocks." The excitement will wear off. The *entente*, which Russia in her present condition must desire, will not easily break up. But a shadow has fallen across the situation, and the disinterestedness and security of the last ten years has been distinctly ruffled.

No. 236.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 5809/4/08/44A.

(No. 17.) Very Confidential.

Vienna, D. February 15, 1908.

Sir,

R. February 19, 1908.

I have the honour to report that, owing to Baron d'Aehrenthal's press of work in the Delegations, I was unable to see His Excellency until yesterday afternoon. I then duly conveyed to him the message contained in your telegram No. 4 of the 12th instant. . . .⁽¹⁾

Before leaving him I asked Baron d'Aehrenthal whether the statement made in the "Neue Freie Presse" that the Russian Government was about to ask for a concession for a railway line from the Serbo-Roumanian frontier to the Adriatic had any foundation. His Excellency replied that whether the statement was true or not he had not the slightest objection to such a demand being made. All railway projects tending to the opening up of the Balkan Peninsula would be welcomed by him. They would be the complements of his own railway policy, and, by whatever nation initiated, would all have the same effect, namely, the development of the material resources of the regions through which they passed, and, what was more important still, the pacification of Macedonia. This was all to the advantage of Austria-Hungary, so why should he object?

I had not said a word to lead His Excellency to the idea that I thought he would object to the Russian project, but the article in the "Neue Freie Presse"⁽²⁾ to which I had referred was certainly very violent, and showed the greatest resentment at the action alleged to be contemplated by the Russian Government.

His Excellency then expressed great surprise at the stir which his railway project had created, and supposed that I had heard it much discussed in Diplomatic circles. I said that it was not so much the project itself which I had heard discussed at the moment at which the Concession was asked for and the Sultan's Iradé issued. I added that he was probably aware that the news of what had taken place had not made a favourable impression in London. He said that he had heard this with regret, "but," he continued, "surely Sir Edward Grey did not expect me to wait till the end of the Reform negotiations before taking the first step necessary to put into effect a Railway policy so necessary to our commercial development. I might have had to

⁽¹⁾ [The omitted part of this despatch deals with the Macedonian Reforms, but does not add materially to previous information.]

⁽²⁾ [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

wait for years. Besides," he added, "it must not be forgotten that His Majesty's Government had pursued more or less the same course in dealing with the additional 3% Turkish duties." He well knew that our Reform policy was largely dictated by humanitarian ideas, but still we had not been above making our consent on that occasion dependent upon the grant of certain demands in return for our sacrifices. I replied that I could not admit the analogy. We had made certain demands, it was true, but they were for the public good, they had not been sprung on the Powers at a vital moment, but had been made openly and with the full knowledge of all the Powers.

Besides I could not call to mind that we had made our demands at a moment when, after long and tedious negotiation, a Note upon a most important subject had been drawn up and was ready for signature, and when the Great Powers were presumed to be acting in complete concert with a view to making a supreme effort to bring about its acceptance.

In reply Baron d'Aehrenthal said that the policy of the two countries was different, ours was idealistic and humanitarian, his was frankly realistic. The conclusion of the *Ausgleich* had rendered his policy of commercial expansion possible; the meeting of the Delegations was the proper moment for announcing it; and he could not [but] be surprised that a matter, which was completely separate from the Reform negotiations, and which was matter purely between Austria-Hungary and the Sublime Porte had caused such a stir as it had evidently done.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 237.

Mr. C. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 6361/4538/08/44A.

(No. 25.) Confidential.

Sir,

Sophia, D. February 19, 1908.

R. February 24, 1908.

The question of the junction of the terminus of the Bosnian Railways, with Mitrovitsa, South of the Sanjak of Novi Bazar, which had not at first attracted much attention here, probably owing to the fact that the public was too much engrossed in the settlement of the University question, has, since the last declarations of Baron Aehrenthal before the Austro-Hungarian Delegations, been taken up seriously by the Press.

Monsieur Daneff, leader of the Russophil Party, echoes in the "Bulgaria" the cries of alarm which have been raised in St. Petersburg at the Austro-German "*Drang nach Osten*." He views with anxiety the *rapprochement* between Austria and Turkey, and finds in the mark of signal favour granted by the Porte to Austria, the explanation of the delay in the execution of the Judicial Reforms. It is inconceivable, he thinks, that Turkey should have given anything without receiving something in return and that, he opines, must be to the cost of the welfare of the Christian population of Macedonia. He concludes by advising Bulgarians to keep a close watch upon all coming events and above all he urges upon them the necessity of maintaining the Army in a high state of efficiency so as to be prepared for any eventuality.

This piece of advice is noteworthy as coming from a party which has hitherto been opposed to any increase in the Army, maintaining that it is not Bulgaria who will be called upon to solve the Macedonian problem, but the Great Powers; and it is interesting as being probably prompted by Russia.

The Nationalist organs thank Austria for having thrown so valuable a light on the dealings of the Powers in the Balkans; they express their annoyance at the

probable future connection of the Austrian and Greek Railway Systems and conclude that Bulgaria must in turn insist on the construction of the Kustendil*-Kumanova line.

The "Stambolovist" and the "Democratic" (Government) Press express feelings of disappointment but refrain from emitting any decided opinions and give an impression of wanting to mark time.

In fine the general feeling is that Russia has been duped by Austria, that the solution of the question of Macedonian Reforms is farther off than ever, that a new peril has arisen in the shape of the "Teutonic Peril;" that the Slav races of the South are in danger and that the only way Bulgaria can avoid isolation is by insisting on the construction of the Kustendil-Kumanovo Line; it is also urged that Bulgaria should take advantage of the situation by pressing for the introduction of genuine reforms in Macedonia and the appointment of a Christian Governor-General.

In the course of conversation the day before yesterday with the Minister for Foreign Affairs I alluded to the subject. His Excellency, who is not very loquacious, perhaps owing to his scanty knowledge of French, confessed that he felt anxious, for he considered the question as purely political and of the highest importance to Bulgaria. The whole thing, he said, had come so unexpectedly that the Government did not at all know what to do; for the present they must wait to see what line Russia would take, but they thought it would only be fair for them to expect now to obtain the authorisation from the Porte to construct the Kustendil-Kumanovo Line, which would place Sofia in direct communication with Uskub and Salonica.

It should be observed that the Servian project of a line running from the Danube through the Timoc [*sic*] Valley, Nisch and on to the Adriatic would be greatly detrimental to Bulgarian interests, diverting, as it would do, Roumanian traffic to Servian territory and frustrating the hope long cherished here of connecting the Bulgarian and Roumanian Railway Systems by a bridge at Sistovo, which would provide this country with means of access to Europe independent of Servia.

I may add that the French Agent, Monsieur Paleologue, tells me very confidentially that the idea of obtaining the concession for the Novi Bazar Railway was initiated by Austria-Hungary as far back as last autumn shortly after the visit of the Grand Duke Vladimir, which they feared was the prelude to a renewal of Russian activity in the Near East.

I have, &c.

COLVILLE BARCLAY.

*"There is a line from Sofia to Kustendil. Kumanovo is close to Uskub and is on the line from Nish to Salonica.—A. P."

No. 238.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. 6671/6/08/44.

(No. 59.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1908.

Count Metternich read to me to-day, by the desire of Prince Bülow, a Memorandum which he had received, giving the view of the German Government with regard to the Near East.⁽¹⁾

The German Government considered that the political *status quo* should be maintained, but they were at one with the civilised world in thinking that the unbearable

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXII, pp. 516-9.*]

condition of affairs in Macedonia urgently needed to be remedied. They would like to see measures adopted to put an end to the bloodshed, murder, plunder, and incendiarism. But any measures could be successful only if the union of the Powers was preserved undisturbed.

The German Government would take into their serious and benevolent consideration any proposal which would be apt to ameliorate the condition of Macedonia if the proposal found assent from the other Powers. It remained to be considered what sort of measures would be apt to effect this.

The German Government did not entirely put aside the strengthening of the Gendarmerie, or dismiss it as impracticable, though they were doubtful whether it would lead to the desired goal. They were sceptical as to Turkish Troops being led by Christian Officers, and also as to the idea that Christian Officers might have general powers of giving orders to be carried out by Turkish Officers.

The German Government thought that the elaboration of measures to put an end to the awful state of things in Macedonia should be confided to the Ambassadors at Constantinople.

As to Judicial Reforms. The German Government considered that the carrying out of such reforms was useful and even urgently required, though they were not the best or most efficient means of pacifying the Balkan countries, and the German Government doubted whether the existing draft Note was right in every part. But, whether perfect or not, the German Government were ready to adhere if all the other Powers did the same, and the German Ambassador was instructed to sign the Note if the other Ambassadors did so. And, if approached by the Turks, he was instructed to recommend the acceptance of the Note as proposed.

There might be a difference of opinion as to practical methods, but to hold one or the other view about any particular proposal was not in contradiction with general principles.

To present the imperfect Judicial Reforms Note as it stood might gain a basis for further negotiations with Turkey, and, even if it did not achieve anything more, might at any rate secure the prolongation of the mandates.

An alternative was to improve the Judicial Reforms Note before presenting it, thereby increasing the chance of its acceptance by the Turks and diminishing the probability of obstinate resistance to it.

The German Ambassador at Constantinople preferred this alternative, and this not in order to hinder, but in order to secure the realisation of the project. He was in favour of the prolongation of the mandates, and had supported his Colleagues in that.

As to the Railway, Germany considered that Austria's right to this line under the Treaty of Berlin was well founded. It was an economic project, and was not at variance with either the letter or the spirit of the *entente* between Austria and Russia and the Mürzsteg Programme. There was no truth in the idea that Austria had put forward this Railway proposal at the expense of the progress of reforms. The German Government had not initiated the Railway proposal at Vienna, nor had they thrust their support on Austria with regard to it. But they admitted that they sympathised with it because of Austria's undoubted *bona fides* and full loyalty of action. They saw in the Railway not only good right, but also a means to raise the economic and moral condition of the country through which it was to pass, and they considered the Railway would contribute to the pacification of that country.⁽²⁾ The German Government had, therefore, supported the proposal at Constantinople, and

(2) [This project was mentioned by Baron von Achrenthal to the German Ambassador at Vienna in January 1907, *G.P.* XXV, II, 289. At the end of April 1907, he touched on the Novibazar railway project in a visit to Berlin (*G.P.* XXV, II, pp. 291-2, *note*). The Foreign Secretary Herr von Tschirschky stated 7 May, 1907, that Germany could not support it against the wish of the Sultan (*G.P.* XXII, pp. 55-6). Baron von Marschall received instructions, on enquiry, from Herr von Schoen to support the Austro-Hungarian request at Constantinople on 31 December, 1907 (*G.P.* XXV, II, pp. 293-5, and *notes*.]

were ready to give similar support to other enterprises based on similar rights and pursuing similar objects.

As to the Turco-Persian frontier question, it did not endanger German interests, and Germany had therefore no cause to take any part in it. But the German Government had thought it well, in the general interest, to give urgently and repeatedly advice at Constantinople that Turkey should end this dispute in a friendly manner, and take the first step by withdrawing her troops from the disturbed district.

As to rumours in the Press to the effect that the German Government were encouraging Turkey to increase her armaments, or encouraging Turkey in a warlike spirit (which, as a matter of fact, did not exist at Constantinople), these rumours were absolutely untrue.

I said to Count Metternich that the fact that Germany had already considered it desirable to advise the Turks to withdraw their troops from Persian territory was rather at variance with the view that there was no warlike spirit at Constantinople. As a matter of fact, the Turks had committed a flagrant violation of Persian territory, and if we had had direct British interests or concessions there, we should never have tolerated the violation. We had made repeated representations at Constantinople, but all the promises of the Turks, both to us and to Russia, had been always broken. I reminded Count Metternich that Great Britain and Russia had many years ago indicated the zone in which the frontier was to be found. Count Metternich said that the reference to German disbelief in a warlike spirit at Constantinople referred to rumours of preparations on the part of Turkey to attack the Caucasus.

As to the rest of Prince Bülow's Memorandum, I desired Count Metternich to thank him for having communicated his view so fully and I was gratified to observe the emphasis which the German Government laid upon the bad state of affairs in Macedonia and the need for a remedy: it was satisfactory to have that put so strongly.

But the Memorandum did not throw much light upon the difficulty of finding a remedy. Discussion amongst the Ambassadors at Constantinople would depend upon what their instructions were. No doubt, it would be helpful if in the instructions to the Ambassadors there was included the urgent language which the German Government now used about the state of affairs in Macedonia. But it would probably be better that the Powers should agree as to what sort of remedy they considered ought to be applied, and should then make the Ambassadors understand that they were in earnest about it. The Ambassadors might elaborate some of the details.

I said that I could not regard the renewal of the mandates as any concession to the Powers requiring any *quid pro quo* on our part. It was a necessary consequence of the conditions attached to the increase of the Customs dues.

As to the Railway, our attitude towards the various railway projects in the Balkans might be regarded as one of benevolent neutrality. We had been approached by the Servians some time ago, and had told them we were favourable to railway projects generally, but could not promise our support to any particular project. It would be undesirable for us to promise our support to one project, and then to be asked afterwards to support a rival project, to which our support could not consistently be given.

As a matter of fact, we had taken no action whatever at Constantinople with regard to railways in the Balkans; though it had seemed to us that the Sultan's Iradé in favour of this particular Railway, coming at the very moment when the Reforms Note was in a critical situation, was unfortunate. The effect produced by it must have given the Sultan the impression that the Concert was weakened.

Whether or not the Railway project was inconsistent with the letter or the spirit of the *entente* between Austria and Russia it was for these Powers to say. I did not see how we, who were not a party to that *entente*, could pronounce an opinion on the point.

I asked Count Metternich whether the views in Prince Bülow's Memorandum had been communicated to the other Powers, and he said he assumed that they had.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 239.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir N. O'Connor.

F.O. 4831/6/08/44A.

(No. 70.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1908.

I enclose herein copy of a Desp[atch] from H[is] M[ajesty's] Agent and Consul-General at Sofia,⁽¹⁾ in which mention is made of the railway project recently sketched by the Austro-Hungarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] in his declaration to the Delegations.

Sir G. Buchanan adds that the Bulgarian Agent at Constantinople has already been instructed to press on the S[ublime] P[orte] the advisability of consenting at the same time to the construction of a line from Kustendil to Kumanovo, so as to link the Turkish and Bulgarian Railway systems.

I shall be glad to learn from Y[our] E[xcellency] what reception the Bulgarian railway proposal has met with at Constantinople.

[I am, &c.]

E. GREY.]

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 240.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 7329/4538/08/44.

(No. 9.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 25, 1908.

The Servian Minister pressed me to-day to give support at Constantinople to the railway scheme in which the Servians are interested.

He said that M. Passitch had received promises of support from France, Russia, Germany, and Austria, though he added that the support given by Germany and Austria was not likely to be very whole-hearted.

I explained to him that we had already told the Austrian Government that we could not support their railway scheme at Constantinople, as we considered it very inopportune to put forward applications for concessions in the Balkans at the very moment when the reform negotiations with regard to Macedonia were in a critical position. I could only give the same answer to the Servian Government.

The Minister explained the reasons why he thought the Servian scheme was not on the same footing as the Austrian one.

I told him it would be impossible for us to give a different reply to Servia without revising the reply we had already given to Austria. I thought Servia ought to be content at receiving the same reply as we had given to a Great Power, and she must not construe our reply as signifying that we were in any way opposed to her railway scheme.

I am, &c.]

E. GREY.

No. 241.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, February 26, 1908.

. . . .⁽²⁾ Iswolsky was undoubtedly much vexed and indignant with d'Aehrenthal in regard to the Novi Bazar railway question. He told me that he considered that the latter had not acted straightforwardly. He had threshed out the Macedonian question with d'Aehrenthal last October, and not a word had been said as to the railway, and it was only 8 or 10 days before d'Aehrenthal made his speech that he had any cognizance of Austria having applied for the Iradé. His vexation will, doubtless, pass away, but his confidence has been shaken; and what is galling to a man of some vanity, he feels that he has, in a measure, been duped. Moreover the outburst in the press was so strong—that he could not, even if he wished, put matters back on the old footing; and he will now, while preserving so far as lies in his power, the concert of Europe for as long as possible, gravitate gradually to our standpoint. At least this was his view when I last saw him four or five days ago. I may find him weakening when I next see him. I do not imagine that you wish me to unduly force the pace with him, but to allow the inevitable logic of events to work out its natural effects. He does not believe that any real practical results will ensue from further cooperation with Austria alone, or with Germany, as he considers that both countries, whatever their official or semi-official press may say or even whatever assurances he may receive himself from Berlin or Vienna, cannot be depended upon to press through the reforms with the Sultan. He was much surprised that d'Aehrenthal, who was for so many years here, should have ignored the deep feeling which exists in Russia on all Balkan and Macedonian matters, and has not appreciated the fact that the Mürzsteg Agreement was unpopular in this country, and would not withstand any great shocks. . . .⁽³⁾

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]⁽²⁾ [The first part of this letter refers to M. Isvolski's views on Macedonian Reform and seems of no special importance.]⁽³⁾ [The last part of this letter refers to the influence of the Russian press.]

No. 242.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 8019/4538/08/44A.

(No. 94.) Confidential.

Sir,

*Berlin, D. March 2, 1908.**R. March 9, 1908.*

I have the honour to report that at my interview with Prince Bülow on February 28th last, His Serene Highness, after discussing the question of the correspondence between the Emperor and Lord Tweedmouth,⁽¹⁾ talked to me at some length on the Macedonian question. His Serene Highness explained to me the views of the German Government, but it is unnecessary for me to repeat them, as Count Metternich has been instructed to communicate them to you.⁽²⁾ Prince Bülow's principal points were that Austria had a perfect right to apply for the Iradé for the Sanjak Railway. Any other country in her position would have made the railway years ago. Baron d'Aehrenthal may perhaps have chosen an inopportune moment for urging the claim, and the Russian, French and English Press were absolutely wrong in thinking that the German Government had encouraged him to do so. As a

⁽¹⁾ [Printed in full in *G.P.* XXIV, pp. 32–6.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 341–4, No. 238.]

matter of fact, they had not been consulted, and only heard about it when Baron d'Aehrenthal made his speech in the delegations. His Serene Highness' other point was that the German Ambassador at Constantinople had never in any way encouraged the Sultan to resist the demands of the Powers.

I told Prince Bülow that the Emperor had said recently to me in conversation that Austria was perfectly right and Russia completely wrong, but that he had caused a telegram to be sent to M. Isvolsky which had brought him to his knees and that now everything would go on smoothly. His Serene Highness appeared much perturbed that His Majesty should have made such a statement to me, which he inferred conveyed an inaccurate impression. He said that as the Emperor had mentioned the matter to me, he would tell me exactly what had happened. Count Osten Sacken had addressed a note to Herr von Schoen stating that M. Isvolsky regretted the tone of the Russian Press, and hoped that in spite of the action at Vienna, which he characterised in diplomatic language as unfortunate, the friendly relations between Russia and Germany would remain unimpaired.⁽³⁾ Prince Bülow thereupon caused a reply to this note to be sent to St. Petersburg by telegram, to the effect that he trusted that the wisdom of the statesmen at St. Petersburg and Vienna would insure the continuance of cordial relations between all the Powers.

The Emperor did not know of this telegram until two days after it had been sent off, and His Majesty's claim of having originated it himself was but another instance of the difficulties with which his responsible Minister has to contend.

I have, &c.

FRANK C. LASCELLES.

(3) [*v. G.P.* XXV, II, pp. 343-8, 351-2.]

No. 243.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, March 3, 1908.

F.O. 7465/4538/08/44 A.

D. 8:38 P.M.

Tel. (No. 11.)

R. 10:30 P.M.

The object of Minister for Foreign Affairs' interview was to tell me that Italian Ambassador has communicated to him a Memorandum (which M. Cambon will give you), asking the French Government to obtain the support of His Majesty's Government to a scheme for the construction by an international Syndicate of so-called Servian railway to run from the Black Sea to the Adriatic, the capital to be raised in following shares, viz., 40 per cent. at Paris, and 15 per cent. in each of the following countries: England, Russia, Italy, Servia.

Italian Ambassador here says Russia favours the scheme, and that Austria does not make objection to it, nor does Bulgaria.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told the Italian Ambassador that the French Government do not desire to take any initiative in Balkan affairs. They wish to act with the other Powers. He would, however, instruct French Ambassador to speak to you on the subject of the scheme.

Russian Ambassador has sent to French Minister for Foreign Affairs a Memorandum advocating the adoption of Italian scheme.

Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks that result of pressing the Porte to agree to several railway schemes which have been proposed would be that none would be carried out.

Memorandum communicated to Count Benckendorff, March 4, 1908.

F.O. 7504/4538/08/44.

On the 2nd instant the Russian Ambassador made a communication to the following effect:—

The Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t, in informing the Russian Gov[ernmen]t of their projected railway between the Bosnian frontier and Mitrovitsa, had declared that their sole object was economic and an improvement in the means of communication of the Balkan Peninsula.

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t had always felt a keen interest in the economic development of the Balkan States and their inhabitants, and they were consequently of opinion that the construction of railways, linking up the different parts of the Peninsula and affording them free access to the surrounding seas, would contribute to the peaceful progress of the countries in question. Having no object of personal advantage in view, the Russian Gov[ernmen]t had invariably abstained, and would continue in the future to abstain, from seeking railway concessions in the Balkans on their own account; but they were prepared to look with favour upon all railway schemes calculated to further the purpose indicated.

In these circumstances, the Russian Gov[ernmen]t had acceded to a request of the Servian Gov[ernmen]t that the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople should support a project for a line opening up communication between the Danube and the Adriatic Sea, and instructions had been issued accordingly. Moreover, the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, being convinced that it would be easy to co-ordinate and conciliate on the spot the various interests concerned, would view in a manner equally favourable other railway projects which might be put forward by the respective Balkan States, and would afford them diplomatic support of a similar character.

Count Benckendorff was instructed to inform H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] of the attitude of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, and to express the hope that they would view the matter in a similar light, and support the steps taken by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t at Constantinople to accomplish the object in question.

Sir E. Grey has the honour to state, in reply, that the Servian Minister called at the Foreign Office on the 20th ultimo and asked that the support of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] might be afforded to this project.

M. Militchevitch was informed that, although H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had no special objections to raise to either the Servian or the Austro-Hungarian railway projects in Macedonia, they had already intimated to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t that they could not regard as opportune a request for a Concession at a moment when the Powers contemplated pressing the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t for the introduction of some very important schemes of reform which had occupied their attention for a considerable time, and they consequently did not consider that the present was a suitable moment for the Powers to ask, or to support demands, for Concessions for the Austro-Hungarian or any other railway project in Macedonia.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] entirely share the views of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t as to the advantages of railway construction in the Balkan Peninsula, both as a civilising element and as a means of economic development, provided that the grant of concessions for this purpose does not run counter to and render nugatory the exercise of pressure upon the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t for the introduction of necessary and more important reforms of an administrative order. In view of the fact that an Iradé has already been issued for a survey of the line from the Bosnian frontier to Mitrovitsa, and that the initiative has thus been taken by the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t in a policy of railway development in the Balkan Peninsula, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], though unable, for the reasons already stated, to give their active support at Const[antino]ple to the Servian

Railway project, and while maintaining their opinion as to the inopportuneness of the present moment for obtaining from the Turkish Gov[ernment]t concessions for railways in Macedonia, declare themselves to be in principle in complete sympathy with the proposed Servian Railway scheme and its simultaneous realisation with the Austrian railway project.

E. G.

Foreign Office, March 4, 1908.

No. 245.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 7748/6/08/44.

F.O. Turkey 95.

(No. 31.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 4, 1908.

The Austrian Ambassador told me to-day that Baron d'Aehrenthal had expressed his satisfaction at the statement in my speech on Macedonia⁽¹⁾ that we would continue to work in the Concert with the other Powers for Macedonian reforms; but he regretted very much that I should have seemed to support the idea that the Austrian railway project was unfavourable to the cause of reform. The railway project was for Austria a matter of Treaty right which was universally admitted, and every country had the right to further its own interests. Indeed, other Powers were constantly asking for some commercial favours at Constantinople, and all Austria had done was to ask for something to which she already had an admitted Treaty right.

I replied that I did not dispute the right of Austria to pursue her own interests or to do what she had done in this matter. Any Power had the right, if it pleased, to leave the Concert and drop the question of Macedonian reforms altogether. All I could do in such a case would be to point out that the consequences would be injurious to the cause of reform.

With regard to the railway project, an unfavourable impression had been made by it long before I spoke. He had told me that Baron d'Aehrenthal thought it might have been better if I had omitted all mention of the Austrian railway project; but it would have been impossible for me to have done so, for preceding speakers in the Debate, to say nothing of the Press, had dwelt upon it at length. The unfavourable impression produced by the *Iradé* of the Sultan coming at a critical moment was a matter of fact, and I could not pass it by in silence.

As it was, I had said I trusted there was no ground for the apprehension to which the project had given rise, but that it was incumbent upon the Powers to remove the impression which had been made. I had also given Baron d'Aehrenthal full credit for the earnestness with which he had spoken of the seriousness of the situation in Macedonia, though I had pointed out that this did not take us any further unless there were also practical suggestions for a remedy.⁽¹⁾

Count Mensdorff said it was felt that the line I had taken had not been such as to calm the excitement in the Press and the unfavourable feeling, not only here, but in Russia.

I told him that the only thing which would calm these was an announcement that the Powers were putting forward practical reforms at Constantinople and were going to press them. It was useless to attempt to remove the present unfavourable impression till some such announcement could be made. An announcement of this kind would remove it at once. Nothing else would do any good.

⁽¹⁾ [This refers to Sir Edward Grey's Speech of February 25 in the House of Commons, *Parl. Deb., 4th Ser., Vol. 184, pp. 1692-1708, v. also his private letter to Sir E. Goschen of March 11, p. 234, No. 191.*]

Count Mensdorff told me that, though Baron d'Aehrenthal had not discussed any proposal with Sir E. Goschen, he was ready to take into consideration anything we put forward. Count Mensdorff felt, however, the difficulty of making proposals which were feasible.

I replied that any proposals were feasible which did not involve a disintegration of Turkish territory, provided the Powers made it clear that they were in earnest and intended to have the proposals accepted. But if they did not make this clear, no proposal whatever would be feasible, for the Sultan would object to everything, great or small.

Count Mensdorff said that the idea of an independent Governor might be regarded as a disintegration of Turkish territory, and the Sultan had the opinion of his own subjects to consider.

I said I regarded the fact that the Governor might be a Moslem as one which would very much diminish the Sultan's difficulty in dealing with his own subjects. The suggestion that, as a part of this proposal, all the foreign Officers in Macedonia should be in the pay of the Turkish Government would also help the Sultan. Further, the proposal that there should be a guarantee of the Macedonian Vilayets from external aggression as long as the arrangement lasted would not disintegrate but strengthen the Sultan's position.

Sooner or later, if things continued in Macedonia as bad as they were, the fire might spread to Bulgaria, and then there would be war. The past experience had been that the Turks always came out of war with a loss of territory.

As to the railway project, I repeated to Count Mensdorff that we had considered it inopportune. We had since been approached by the Servians with a railway project of theirs, and we had repeated to them the answer we had given to the Austrian Government. But it was our view that, if one railway project was proceeded with, the Porte should also let the other projects proceed simultaneously.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 246.

Sir E. Egerton to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, March 5, 1908.

F.O. 7685/4538/08/44A.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 5.)

R. 11 P.M.

It is officially stated that Russian Circular respecting Balkan railways⁽¹⁾ is accepted by Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I learn that France also supports Servian demand, and that Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs has telegraphed to London to know whether you will do so likewise.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 347-8, No. 244.]

No. 247.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Egerton.

F.O. 8312/4538/08/44.

(No. 23.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 5, 1908.

The Italian Chargé d'Affaires came to tell me to-day that the Italian Government had received a communication from the Russian Government asking them to support the Danube-Adriatic railway scheme. The Italian Government had sent instructions

to their Ambassador at Constantinople to support the scheme, and Signor Tittoni hoped we would do the same.

I told him that the Austrians had already asked us to support the Novi-Bazar railway project. In replying to them I had said that we were quite favourable in principle to railways in Turkey, but that to press for railway concessions at a moment when Macedonian reforms were making no progress would produce the very unfavourable impression that the Powers were abandoning the reforms in order to pursue their own interests. Therefore we could not take any steps at Constantinople in support of any railway project until some proposals for Macedonian reforms were forthcoming which seemed likely to be effective in preventing what would otherwise be a very bad state of affairs this summer.

But if satisfactory proposals were put forward, and the Porte subsequently made objections to the Danube-Adriatic project, we should be prepared to use our influence at Constantinople to represent that, if the Novi-Bazar scheme was sanctioned by the Porte, the other project should also be agreed to.

Count Bosdari said Signor Tittoni was going to make a speech on the 10th, when he was to be interpellated by an Irredentist Member of the Italian Parliament, and he intended to suggest that the railway schemes, being for the benefit of Macedonia, might form part of a general scheme of Macedonian reforms. Signor Tittoni would like my opinion as to this suggestion.

I replied that, provided effective proposals for Macedonian reforms were put forward, and the Powers were united in pressing them upon the Porte, I saw no reason why railway projects, which were undoubtedly for the good of the country, should not also be pressed. What I deprecated was that railway schemes should be pressed while the reforms were making no progress.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 248.

Memorandum communicated to M. Cambon, March 17, 1908.

F.O. 8431/4538/08/44.

On the 10th instant the French Ambassador made a communication to the effect that the Russian and Italian Gov[ernmen]ts had intimated to the French Gov[ernmen]t the interest they took in the Serbian project for a railway from Nish to San Giovanni di Medua. The French Gov[ernmen]t were likewise well disposed to the scheme, and they were hopeful that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would welcome it on their part. They were aware that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] were not inclined to take steps at Constantinople to further the construction of railways in the Balkan Peninsula, on the ground that it was preferable in the first instance to devote attention to the adoption of reforms in Macedonia. Nevertheless, the French Gov[ernmen]t were of opinion that the construction of new railways in this part of the Ottoman Empire must appear to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], as it did to them, as of a nature to contribute in a considerable degree to the establishment of security.

In these circumstances, without asking that H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Constantinople should take the initiative in pressing for a concession for the line from Nish to the Adriatic, the French Gov[ernmen]t would be glad if, on steps being taken in the direction indicated by the Russian, French and Italian Ambassadors, Sir N. O'Connor were authorised to discuss the scheme with his colleagues, and to intimate to the Sublime Porte that Great Britain would welcome the grant of the concession in question.

Sir E. Grey has the honour to transmit to M. Cambon the accompanying copy of a memorandum which was communicated to the Russian Ambassador on the

4th instant,⁽¹⁾ and which explains the attitude of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] on this question.

On the 5th instant Sir E. Grey had a conversation with the Italian Chargé d'Affaires on the subject, in the course of which he intimated that if satisfactory proposals for reform were put forward and effectively pressed upon the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would then be prepared to use their influence at Constantinople to represent that, if the Novi-Bazar scheme were sanctioned, the Danube-Adriatic project should also be agreed to.

Sir E. Grey has no doubt that H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador will discuss the question with his colleagues but, for the reasons stated in the memorandum to the Russian Ambassador, H[is] E[xc]ellency could not be authorised to take any action in support of the scheme at Constantinople until some proposals for Macedonian reforms are forthcoming which seem likely to be effective in preventing what would otherwise be a very bad state of affairs this summer. In the event of such proposals being actively put forward H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] see no reason why railway projects, which are undoubtedly for the good of the country, should not also be pressed, and they would be prepared to do their best to give effect to the view expressed at the end of the memorandum of the March 4th.

Foreign Office, March 17, 1908.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 347-8, No. 244.]

No. 249.

Memorandum communicated to M. Métaxas, March 17, 1908.

F.O. 8196/4538/08/44.

On the 7th instant the Greek Minister communicated the text of the reply of the Greek Gov[ernmen]t to the proposals recently made by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t on the subject of the Servian project for a railway from Nish to San Giovanni di Medua and in regard to railway construction in general in the Balkan Peninsula.

The Greek Gov[ernmen]t, while expressing their gratitude to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t for the attitude they had adopted, asked for their support in securing the assent of the Sublime Porte to the project for linking up the Greek and Turkish railway systems.

M. Métaxas was instructed to ask that the support of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] might likewise be afforded at Constantinople.

Sir E. Grey has the honour to state, in reply that, although H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have no special objections to raise to either the Greek, the Servian, or the Austro-Hungarian railway projects, they have informed the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t⁽¹⁾ that they could not regard as opportune a request for a concession at a moment when the Powers contemplated pressing the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t for the introduction of some very important schemes of reform which have occupied their attention for a considerable time, and they consequently do not consider that the present is a suitable moment for the Powers to ask or to support demands for concessions for the Austro-Hungarian or any other railway project in Macedonia.

Provided effective proposals for Macedonian reforms are put forward, and the Powers are united in pressing them upon the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] see no reason why railway projects, which are undoubtedly

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 334-5, No. 232, Sir E. Grey to Sir E. Gosehen, No. 21 of February 12, 1908.]

for the good of the country, should not also be pressed, and would be prepared to use their influence to that end. What they deprecate is that railway schemes should be pressed while the reforms are making no progress.

Foreign Office, March 17, 1908.

No. 250.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11640/4538/08/44.

(No. 142.)

Sir,

Pera, D. March 25, 1908.

R. April 6, 1908.

I learn from the Greek Minister that he has presented a Note to the Sublime Porte asking for permission for the linking up of the Greek and Turkish Railway systems. As explained to me the scheme in contemplation is for the line from Larissa to cross the frontier at Platamona and to run from thence along the coast to Salonica.

I have, &c.

G. BARCLAY.

No. 251.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Bosdari.

F.O. 12410/4538/44.

Foreign Office, April 16, 1908.

Sir E. Grey has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the Italian Chargé d'Affaires' letter of the 10th instant⁽¹⁾ on the subject of the Balkan Railway projects.

As Sir E. Grey intimated to Count de Bosdari on the 5th ultimo, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will be prepared, as soon as satisfactory proposals for reforms in Macedonia are put forward at Constantinople, to use their influence at the Sublime Porte to represent that, if the Novi-Bazar scheme is sanctioned, the Servian project should also be agreed to.

⁽¹⁾ [Count de Bosdari's letter asked if instructions could be sent to the British representative at Constantinople to support the Servian Danube railway project if the Novibazar one were agreed to, *cp. G.P. XXV, II, pp. 367-74.*]

No. 252.

Mr. G. Barclay to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 15167/4538/08/44.

(No. 216.)

Sir,

Pera, D. April 28, 1908.

R. May 4, 1908.

The Greek Minister called upon me yesterday to ask for my informal support for the application which, as reported in my Despatch No. 142 of the 25th ultimo,⁽¹⁾ he has made to the Porte for the linking up of the Greek and Turkish railway systems. Monsieur Gryparis said that he was aware of the attitude of His Majesty's Government towards the various railway projects in Macedonia, but he trusted that I would see my way, should an opportunity occur, to say a word in favour of the Greek scheme. He pointed out that Greece was now the only country in Europe which had no railway connection with other countries and laid stress on the non-political and non-strategical purpose of the line, the objects of which were purely commercial, the coast route having been selected rather than a more Western route which would have been more agreeable to Turkey, only because it was shorter and easier to construct.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 352, No. 250.]

I promised Monsieur Gryparis to report his visit to you, but said that in view of the attitude of His Majesty's Government with which he was familiar, in regard to railway construction at the present moment in Macedonia, I could not see my way to saying anything at the Porte in favour of the Larissa-Salonica line.

In reply to my inquiry whether he had asked for the support of the other Embassies, he again emphasized the non-political character of the project, and said that he had only asked them for the same informal support as he had solicited from me.

I have, &c.

G. BARCLAY.

No. 253.

Count Benckendorff to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 23693/4538/08/44.

Chesham House, Chesham Place,

Dear Sir Edward,

July 8, 1908.

This is the translation of M. Isvolsky's telegram, to which I referred yesterday in conversation.

Yours truly,

BENCKENDORFF.

Enclosure in No. 253.

M. Isvolski to Count Benckendorff.

(Traduction.)

(Télégraphique.)

Saint-Petersbourg, le 19 Juin (2 Juillet), 1908.

M. Nelidoff nous informe de Constantinople que la société de la ligne de jonction Salonique-Constantinople a adressé au Gou[vernemen]t Ottoman la demande formelle d'une concession pour la ligne Danube-Adriatique.

En conséquence de ceci le Gou[vernemen]t Serbe renonce à sa demande de concession pour la même ligne. Ce Gouv[ernemen]t nous demande d'appuyer à Constantinople les démarches de cette Société en vue de la promulgation d'un Iradé à ce sujet.

Des instructions conformes ont été adressées à M. Nelidoff.

Veuillez, en vue de l'aboutissement de nos négociations pour le programme de réformes, et de mes entretiens avec Sir Ch. Hardinge à Reval, vous informer auprès de Sir Edward Grey, si le Gou[vernemen]t de S[a] M[ajesté] Britannique ne jugerait pas le moment venu pour une démarche à Constantinople. Les circonstances pouvant devenir pressantes nous aimons à espérer qu'il ne nous le refusera pas.

No. 254.

Sir Edward Grey to Count Benckendorff.

F.O. 23693/4538/08/44.

Foreign Office, July 15, 1908.

Sir E. Grey presents his compliments to the Russian Ambassador and has the honour to acknowledge the receipt of H[is] E[xc]ellency's communication of the 8th instant⁽¹⁾ respecting the transfer to the Salonica Railway Company of the application to the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t for a concession in connection with the proposed Danube-Adriatic Railway.

Sir E. Grey has the honour to state, in reply, that if satisfactory proposals for reform in Macedonia are put forward and *effectively* pressed upon the Ottoman

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

Gov[ernmen]t, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will then be prepared to accede to the request of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t and to use their influence at Constantinople to represent that, if the Novi-Bazar scheme is sanctioned, the Danube-Adriatic project should also be agreed to.

Foreign Office, July 15, 1908.

No. 255.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 28454/4538/08/44.

(No. 458.)

Sir,

Therapia, D. August 10, 1908.

R. August 17, 1908.

I took an opportunity to-day of asking the Grand Vizier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs what action the Turkish Government proposed to take regarding the Danube-Adriatic Railway and I said that His Majesty's Government earnestly hoped that if the Porte intended to encourage the building of the proposed Railways that equal facilities would be granted to the Danube-Adriatic scheme as to the Novi Bazar scheme.

His Highness said that so far only permission for a survey had been asked for and that the matter was under the consideration of the Ministry of Public Works. The Russian Chargé d'Affaires had spoken on the subject and had been asked as to the conditions on which it was proposed the line should be built, but Monsieur Nelidow had replied that the matter was not yet far advanced enough to say anything definite; all they wanted was the permission to survey.

I gathered both from the Grand Vizier and the Minister for Foreign Affairs that they considered that the finances of the country would in future not be able to stand the strain of kilometric guarantees, and the Grand Vizier seemed to regard these lines as purely political and strategic and not to view either of them with much favour.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

No. 256.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 28067/27111/08/44.

(No. 329.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 18, 1908.

With reference to my despatch No. 167 of May 6th last respecting the proposed junction of the Greek and Ottoman railway systems, I transmit to Y[our] E[xcellency] herewith copies of confidential correspondence left at this Office by Baron G. de Reuter on this subject.⁽¹⁾

I also transmit copy of a letter which I have caused to be addressed to that gentleman⁽¹⁾ informing him that in view of recent events in Turkey H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have no longer any objection to lending their support to the application for a concession to be made at Constantinople and I have to request Y[our] E[xcellency] to take the necessary steps with this object.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 257.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, November 27, 1908.*

F.O. 41464/4638/08/44 A.

D. 2.25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 273.)

R. 3.25 P.M.

Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] told me last night that a syndicate supported by Russian, French, Italian and Servian Governments would shortly be established to carry through the Servian railway to the Adriatic. Negotiations had been conducted at Rome and each Government guaranteed proportionally the interest on the capital which would be 68,000,000 francs at $3\frac{1}{2}\%$. Russia's share would be about £15,000 a year. He gave me the figures very rapidly and I may have misunderstood but the main point is that the railway is to be under this international syndicate and it is anticipated that Turkey will agree.

No. 258.

*Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.**Pera, December 14, 1908.*

F.O. 43731/31738/08/44.

D. 9 P.M.

Tel. (No. 418.)

R. 11 P.M.

My telegram No. 392.

M. Novakovitch, Servian Special Envoy, is leaving to-day without having concluded any written Agreement with the Turkish Government. He says that he has received repeated verbal declarations regarding *entente cordiale* and promises of support at Conference, but that Turkish Ministers have declared that, owing to indiscretions at Belgrade, it is impossible for them to conclude any arrangements in direction of an offensive and defensive alliance.

M. Novakovitch (?nevertheless) told me that Servia still insisted on territorial compensation. She would not regard Adriatic railway as in any way constituting a compensation.

No. 259.

Sir Edward Grey to Count Benckendorff.

F.O. 22424/22280/09/44.

Foreign Office, June 15, 1909.

Sir E. Grey presents his compliments to the Russian Ambassador and, with reference to H[is] E[xc]ellency's communication of the 14th instant respecting the Danube-Adriatic Railway project, has the honour to state that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] agree to the proposal of the Russian Gov[ernment] as to the support which might be afforded to the Italian Gov[ernment] in their efforts to further the prosecution of this scheme, and that H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Constantinople has been instructed to act accordingly.

CHAPTER XL.

THE BOSNIAN CRISIS.

I. THE PRELUDE TO ANNEXATION, 1906-8.

No. 260.

Sir B. Boothby to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/8.

(No. 167.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. October 31, 1906.

R. November 5, 1906.

I have the honour to report that the new Minister for Foreign Affairs, Baron d'Aehrenthal, held his first Diplomatic Reception on the 29th instant.

His Excellency assured me of his English sympathies, and declared that during his diplomatic career his best friends had always been his English colleagues. He charged me to convey his compliments to you and to assure you that he looked forward with pleasure to co-operating with you in maintaining those cordial friendly relations between England and Austria-Hungary which had become traditional, and for the attainment of those objects in which the two countries had a mutual interest. It was, he said a matter of great satisfaction to him that England and Austria-Hungary had no conflicting interests which were likely to cause contention. He regretted that he had not the advantage of being personally acquainted with you, but felt sure that Sir Charles Hardinge, his old friend and colleague, would testify to his pro-English sentiments and ensure a friendly interpretation of his actions in the numerous minor questions which he might be called on to settle with you.

Baron d'Aehrenthal told me that as he had to return to St. Petersburg, he would be absent from Vienna for some little time. He would of course return in time for the Delegations which would last he thought, about three weeks.

His Excellency left for Budapest immediately after the audience and returned yesterday to Vienna. He leaves to-day for St. Petersburg.

I have, &c.

BROOKE BOOTHBY.

No. 261.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/202.

(No. 79.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Sophia, D. August 7, 1907.

R. August 12, 1907.

Prince Ferdinand was received by the Emperor of Austria at Ischl on Sunday, and on the following morning an official communiqué was published here, qualifying as a malicious invention the report that His Royal Highness has the intention of proclaiming the Independence of Bulgaria on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of his accession to the Throne.⁽¹⁾ "Le Prince de Bulgarie," the communiqué concludes, "s'est imposé d'autres devoirs envers la nation Bulgare et ne saurait s'occuper de vaines questions de formalités, de titres et de satisfaction personnelle. La Bulgarie et Son Prince défendent en Orient la cause du progrès et de l'humanité et n'ont en vue que ce noble idéal." It is, at the same time, announced that His Royal Highness has been appointed Honorary Colonel of an Austrian Regiment. The above facts speak for themselves, and there can be but little doubt that it is to the intervention of the Emperor of Austria that we owe the

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 211, No. 165.]

enunciation of these fine sentiments of disinterested patriotism on the part of His Royal Highness.

Unless, however, Prince Ferdinand has entered into some definite engagement with the Emperor, this renunciation, at the eleventh hour, of the intention, which He undoubtedly had, of having Himself proclaimed King at Tirnovo, does not necessarily mean that he has abandoned all idea of effecting such a change in the political status of the Principality. It is, indeed, still believed in certain quarters that the assurances, which His Royal Highness has thus published to the world, do not exclude the possibility of the military pronunciamento in favour of Independence. I am, however, rather inclined to think that He has deferred the execution of His plan to a more favourable opportunity. On the present occasion, thanks to the hints dropped by M. Stancioff in conversation with several of the Diplomatic Agents, most of the Powers were aware of what was in contemplation; but His Excellency is not likely to repeat this mistake a second time and, when the psychological moment arrives, we shall probably be surprised by a step, of which we shall have had no warning. Thus, while the immediate danger may, perhaps, be regarded as past, it may confront us again at a no very distant date, and I therefore venture to submit a few observations on the general bearings of this question.

I have more than once had occasion to point out that Prince Ferdinand is not in entire sympathy with His Subjects on matters of foreign policy and that, while they are bent on the realisation of their national aspirations in Macedonia, His Royal Highness' personal ambitions leave them entirely cold. So far Prince Ferdinand has been content to subordinate his personal desires to those of the nation, but now that the prospect of giving effect to the latter seems farther off than ever, he considers that the time has come to realise the dream with which he has been possessed ever since he first put foot on Bulgarian soil. A natural aversion for the profession of arms and an irresolution of character, which makes it always difficult for him to take a serious decision, dispose Him to look to diplomacy rather than to the sword for the attainment of his ends. It is to his restraining influence that we owe the maintenance of peace in the past; but, if Europe persistently thwarts his wishes, it is doubtful whether we shall be able to count for long on a continuance of his correct attitude.

In a private conversation which I had last week with my Russian Colleague, M. Sementowsky remarked that Bulgaria cannot be expected to remain for ever a vassal of Turkey and that it was his personal impression that, if Independence was not actually proclaimed during the course of the Tirnovo Fêtes, it would very likely be declared a few weeks later. His Government, like the Government of His Majesty, was most anxious that nothing should happen at the present moment to disturb the *status quo* in the Near East, and he had consequently given counsels of prudence and moderation to M. Stancioff. The question, however, was one which required very delicate handling; and it would not be judicious to use too harsh or peremptory language, for it was always easy for the Government here to create incidents that might inflame popular passions. Even supposing that respect for the military resources of the Ottoman Empire might give Prince Ferdinand pause, a pretext could always be found for a war with Servia, whose relations with Bulgaria were of the nature of a *plaie ouverte*. Finally, M. Sementowsky expressed himself as sharing the opinion, generally held in diplomatic circles here, that, in the event of a proclamation of Independence, Turkey would not proceed to extreme measures, but would probably content herself with addressing strong remonstrances to the Powers.

My own views on the subject coincide with those thus expressed by M. Sementowsky; but I do not share the somewhat sanguine view, which he takes of the effect which a declaration of independence is likely to produce in this country. He seems to think that the severance of the ties of Vassalage and the *éclat* that would accompany the transformation of the Principality into an Independent Kingdom would help to "comblér le dissentiment" that unfortunately exists

between the Prince and His subjects. I am, on the contrary, of the opinion that the breach would be widened. The present internal situation of Bulgaria is far from satisfactory. Socialism is on the increase; discontent prevails among the workmen on the State Railways; a fresh strike is talked of; and there is a widespread agitation against the measures adopted by the Government for curtailing the autonomous privileges of the University. A certain opposition is, therefore, almost bound to manifest itself to a step that will jeopardize the position of the Exarch at Constantinople, will deprive Bulgaria of many of the advantages which she at present enjoys for furthering her aspirations in Macedonia and may expose Prince Ferdinand to the accusation of having purchased his crown at the price of the national interests. Of these various grounds for objection the question of the position of the Exarch is the most serious. His Beatitude represents the one link that connects the two branches of the Bulgarian Race and, were he to be expelled from Turkey, the effect on public opinion in this country might be serious, though whether the agitation, to which it might give rise, would be directed against the Prince or against the Ottoman Government it is impossible to say.

While, therefore, I consider that a Declaration of Independence would be contrary to the best interests of Bulgaria, I hardly think that it would endanger the maintenance of peace in the Balkans. I believe, indeed, that if, through the good offices of their Ambassadors at Constantinople, the Powers should succeed in smoothing down the friction, that must at first ensue, we should be relieved for several years to come of the fear of further complications, so far as this country is concerned, and that Prince Ferdinand, when once He had become King, would be chary of compromising the peaceful enjoyment of His new dignity.

In your private telegram of the 30th of last month you were good enough to authorize me to discuss privately with my French and Russian Colleagues suggestions for a common line of action on the part of our respective Governments, in the event of a sudden Proclamation of Independence. As my Russian Colleague has not yet received the necessary authorisation from his Government, I have, so far, only discussed the matter with M. Paleologue, and the enclosed memorandum—founded on verbal proposals which he had submitted to me—represents the result of our exchange of views.

Under present circumstances I do not think that it will be necessary to carry the discussion further, unless we are invited to do so by our Russian Colleague or unless we have grounds for suspecting the sincerity of Prince Ferdinand's assurances. I may, however, mention that, in speaking to me privately on the subject of recognition, M. Sementowsky gave me to understand that he was not favourable to the idea either of a Conference or of the Convocation of a Grand Sobranie; and both M. Paleologue and myself are under the impression that it would be his desire so to arrange matters that Independence, when it comes, should be represented as a gift bestowed by Russia on Bulgaria.

In conclusion I would mention that it is officially announced that the Grand Duke and the Grand Duchess Vladimir, accompanied by a numerous Staff of Russian Officers, are to arrive at Sofia about the 12th of next month, in order to inaugurate the Monument of the Czar Liberator and to assist at certain ceremonies, to be held at Plevna, in commemoration of the war of 1877.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

Enclosure in No. 261.

Memorandum of Suggestions for a common line of action on the part of France and Great Britain, in event of the Proclamation of Bulgarian Independence.

1. That it would be inadvisable to meet the announcement with a formal protest.

2. That act should be taken of it under the express reservation of our final decision.

3. That the Ambassadors at Constantinople should use their good offices to induce the Ottoman Government to abstain from a recourse to military measures and should invite it to confide the final settlement of the question to the Powers.

4. That the Bulgarian Government should be advised that the confirmation of the proposed change in the Constitution by a Grand Sobranie would facilitate the question of Recognition.

5. That a Conference of the Ambassadors of the Powers, Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, should meet at a Capital to be hereafter chosen, in order to determine the conditions on which the Kingdom of Bulgaria should be recognised, more especially as regards the questions of the Tribute, the Capitulations and the position of the Exarch.

[*ED. NOTE.*—For King Edward's visit to the Emperor Francis Joseph at Ischl on August 12, 1908, *v. infra*, pp. 827–30, *App. IV.*]

No. 262.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 371/202.

(No. 310.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 17, 1907.

Count Benckendorff told me to-day that he had heard from M. Isvolsky that an impression prevailed at Sofia that Austria was favouring the declaration of Bulgarian independence, and that we were inclined to do the same.

I explained to Count Benckendorff that there was no truth in this so far as we were concerned. Directly we heard the rumour that, at the celebration at Tirnova, Bulgarian independence might be declared, we had telegraphed to Sir George Buchanan to explain to his French and Russian Colleagues that, if such an emergency arose, we should hope to act in accord with their Governments: and we had authorised him to discuss the matter with them privately with this object, making it quite clear that we did not wish to encourage the Bulgarians to make such a move.

Count Benckendorff said M. Isvolsky felt that a declaration of independence at this time would give rise to undesirable complications.

I told him I entirely agreed with this, and we should not even have discussed the matter but for the possibility of being confronted suddenly with a *fait accompli* when we were unprepared. I hoped that, since the interview of Prince Ferdinand with the Emperor of Austria all danger of this had been removed for the present.

Count Benckendorff said it had also been reported that the Sultan had been sounded and was prepared to recognise Bulgarian independence, but the Russian Government had ascertained that there was no truth in this.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

No. 263.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 29320/23627/08/44A.

(No. 72.)

Sir,

Sophia, D. August 19, 1908.

R. August 24, 1908.

Despite the reproach of inaction levied against it by a certain section of the Press, the Bulgarian Government persistently refuses to depart from the attitude of reserve and observation, which it has maintained since the commencement of the Constitutional Movement in Turkey. Prince Ferdinand still remains abroad and, though at the outbreak of the crisis His Ministers are said to have advised His

immediate return, they now proclaim that such a sudden change in His Royal Highness' plans might give rise to the impression that Bulgaria was about to take some momentous decision. The Press, on the other hand, severely criticises Prince Ferdinand's conduct in remaining abroad at a moment, when it is impossible to foresee what each succeeding day may bring forth. A new journal, which has been started under the name of the "Patriot," has even gone so far as to devote its opening number to attacks on His Royal Highness of a distinctly anti-dynastic nature. After enumerating, in what was virtually a character sketch of Prince Ferdinand, all the qualities which a Patriot ought not to have, and after extolling the late Prince Alexander as the possessor of all patriotic virtues, the journal called on the nation to invite Countess Hartenau and her son, Kroum Asen, to come to Sofia at least once a year to pray by Prince Alexander's grave. None but a criminal, it concluded, would in such a case venture to thwart the clearly expressed will of the people, whose voice was as the voice of God.

Though no importance need be attached to the utterances of a Paper, founded by some unknown politicians for the express purpose of annoying Prince Ferdinand, they may be taken as a sign of His steadily increasing unpopularity. His Royal Highness has always made a point of keeping the direction of Foreign Affairs entirely in his own hands and He is consequently now held responsible for what is generally regarded as the bankruptcy of the national policy with regard to Macedonia. The moment for using the Army, for which the nation has made such enormous sacrifices, has been allowed to pass and even former Chauvinists realise that war with Turkey under present circumstances must end in disaster. So much is this the case that the greatest care is being taken to avoid any step that might be interpreted at Constantinople as an act of provocation. The Autumn Military Manœuvres are to be countermanded and, when a recent frontier incident gave rise to a report of a skirmish between Turkish and Bulgarian troops, the Diplomatic Agent at Constantinople was at once instructed to explain its true character and to propose the appointment of a Mixed Commission for the settlement of all outstanding frontier questions.

Prince Ferdinand thus finds Himself placed in a very difficult position. On the one hand he dares not attempt to extract concessions from the Young Turks by the threat of armed intervention and, on the other, he fears that, when the fact is brought home to the nation that the Army has become an expensive luxury, he will have to consent to a considerable reduction of military expenditure. It is, however, to His Army that He owes such prestige as He possesses as Prince of Bulgaria and it is to it that He looks for support in the event of the internal discontent assuming an acute form, when once public attention has been diverted from the Macedonian Question. Any serious diminution of its numbers would, therefore, be not only a severe blow to His vanity, but would also inspire Him with a sense of insecurity. He is, consequently, most anxious to obtain some satisfaction for the Bulgarian element in Macedonia, that may serve as a sop to public opinion in the Principality, and both He and His Government are impatiently awaiting the result of the negotiations now proceeding at Salonica between the Young Turks and the leaders of the Internal Organisation.

Though nothing definite has so far transpired as regards their course, the demands of the Organisation are said to comprise the immediate establishment of some kind of representative Council in each Commune, Sanjak, and Vilayet; the creation of a National Militia, on the model of the French Garde Nationale, and the assembling of a Congress of Delegates from all the different revolutionary Committees, for the purpose of drawing up a common parliamentary programme. The admission of Christians into the Army and the creation of a Provincial Diet are among the desiderata, that are eventually to be pressed on the acceptance of Parliament.

The difficulty of inducing the Young Turks to sanction such far reaching proposals is enhanced by the fact that in Macedonia the Bulgarians are divided into three parties—the partisans of Sandansky, the peasantry and the Representatives of the Central Committee at Sofia. The first-named are imbued with pronounced Socialist views and are strongly opposed to the idea of Bulgarian ascendancy; the

second desire to see order and good government restored, so that they may develop materially and politically, while the third would like to pave the way for eventual annexation. Sandansky, it is reported, has already concluded an arrangement with the Young Turks, under which he has promised to support them against all comers, the Bulgarians included. His sphere of influence, however, is limited to the Serres district, while that of the Internal Organisation extends over the greater part of Macedonia. The policy of decentralisation advocated by the latter might eventually have the effect of splitting up the Empire into a number of Federal Provinces, and Macedonia might then be in a position either to declare her Independence or to proclaim her union with Bulgaria. The Young Turks, however, are not likely to play into the hands of those who, while disclaiming all desire to separate Macedonia from Turkey, would virtually transform it into a Bulgarian Province. No illusions, indeed, are entertained on the subject in official circles, and one of the leading Ministers recently complained to me that the Young Turks were inclined to be less liberal in their treatment of the question of Bulgarian Schools than the Ottoman Government had been in the days of the Autocracy. His Excellency, who took a very despondent view of the situation, added that the manifestation of sympathy for Great Britain, which had formed so marked a feature of the Constitutional Movement, inspired him with the hope that His Majesty's Government would now acquire a predominant position at Constantinople and that their influence would be exercised in favour of the Christian populations of Macedonia.

I would only add that, while there is no reason to doubt the loyal and correct attitude of the present Government, it is always possible that the Internal Organisation may, should it fail to obtain some substantial concessions, break entirely with the Young Turks and endeavour to stir up troubles in Macedonia. They may be encouraged to do so by the belief, which is still held by many persons here, that the latent antagonism existing between the reactionaries and the leaders of the Constitutional Movement will end in a conflict of some kind and that the state of anarchy, which must then ensue will be Bulgaria's opportunity. Whether these prophets of evil are true or false time only can tell, but it is unfortunately a fact that, with them at any rate, the wish is father to the thought.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 264.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, August 25, 1908.

I have written a despatch as to my Audience of the Emperor.⁽²⁾ I think that the Audience was satisfactory, as H[is] M[ajesty] took more than one occasion to emphasize his desire to work cordially with us on all questions. It is curious to note the great distrust which both the Emperor and Iswolsky have of d'Aehrenthal. Both spoke openly to me on the subject. I should correct a passage in my last letter to you as to Iswolsky meeting d'Aehrenthal at Carlsbad. The Emperor told me that Iswolsky was not to take the initiative in suggesting a meeting, but to await a proposal from d'Aehrenthal. There is, undoubtedly, a coolness between the two cabinets at present, and the Emperor remarked to me that the cloud over the relations had much upset Berchtold, the Ambassador here, who had lamented the fact almost tearfully to Iswolsky.

I see that Cartwright in one of his despatches, suggests that we should assist in bringing about a *rapprochement* between Austria and Russia. I think that it

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 311-3, No. 217.]

would be wiser for us to leave this delicate question alone. Any steps which we might take to that end would possibly be misunderstood here, and the moment is unpropitious in the extreme. The press here is strongly anti-Austrian and anti-German, while both the Emperor and Iswolsky evidently consider that they have not been treated fairly by d'Aehrenthal, and are not in a very conciliatory mood. It would be better to leave the two cabinets to settle their differences between themselves; and not to intervene ourselves in any way. . . .⁽³⁾

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽³⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to Anglo-Russian relations in Afghanistan, Persian railway schemes, and Russian gendarmic officers in Macedonia.]

No. 265.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 30867/30867/08/44A.

(No. 116.) Confidential.

Sir,

Marienbad, D. August 31, 1908.

R. September 5, 1908.

. . . .⁽¹⁾ M. Milanovitch [*sic*] did not seem very satisfied with the relations between Serbia and Austria-Hungary. Count Goluchowski had been rough with Serbia but had not done her much harm. Perhaps even without wishing it he had done her some good. Baron d'Aehrenthal had been more civil but as far as he could see, had evinced no real desire to place the relations of the two countries on a really satisfactory footing. He said that Austro-Hungarian statesmen must be perfectly aware that the occupation of Bosnia had been, and continued to be, a deep wound to Servian dreams and aspirations; he therefore wondered that, with this knowledge, they did not now and then make some little effort to close the wound by at least considerable [*sic*] treatment in other respects. The contrary was however the case, and it seemed to be the whole object of the directors of Austro-Hungarian policy to humiliate Serbia as much as possible and to make her feel that politically and commercially she was entirely at the mercy of her powerful neighbour. He was going shortly to see Baron d'Aehrenthal, and he intended to go into the question of the relations between the two countries with the utmost frankness.

As regards the idea which had lately sprung into some prominence that Austria-Hungary had serious intentions of proceeding in the near future to the annexation of the occupied provinces, M. Milanovitch expressed the opinion that it was entirely erroneous. He could not bring himself to believe that at a critical moment like the present Austria-Hungary would care to open such a dangerous and complicated question, one which was moreover an European rather than an Austro-Hungarian affair. He also felt sure that such action on the part of Austria-Hungary would meet with solid opposition from the Young Turk party.

I may mention in this connection that I have been informed confidentially that this question was recently discussed between Baron d'Aehrenthal and Count Lützow, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Rome. Count Lützow pointed out that the annexation would exasperate Italy, Russia and the Southern Slavs, and would moreover destroy the *status quo* beyond all repair. His Excellency told my informant, however, that though he had discussed the annexation with Baron d'Aehrenthal, he did not believe for one moment that such a step was seriously contemplated.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

⁽¹⁾ [The first part of this despatch deals with railway projects and Macedonia.]

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 32637/31738/08/44A.

(No. 75.)

Sir,

Sophia, D. September 16, 1908.

R. September 21, 1908.

In a conversation, which I had last week with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency alluded to the reports, recently circulated in the Press, respecting the contemplated annexation by Austria-Hungary of Bosnia and the Herzegovine. Baron d'Aehrenthal's reputation as a statesman had, General Paprikoff remarked, somewhat waned since the miscarriage of his ill-advised Railway Scheme, and he was now evidently anxious to retrieve his lost prestige by some diplomatic success in another direction. If, as seemed by no means improbable, he were to attempt to do this by proclaiming the annexation of the two occupied Provinces, the Treaty of Berlin would be torn up and Bulgaria would have to consider whether the time had not arrived for declaring her Independence.

On my pointing out the dangers attending such a course and on my reminding him that it was one, which by no means commended itself to the majority of the nation, General Paprikoff replied that the political situation had greatly changed since last year and that the objections, which might then have been raised to any such alteration in the political status of the Principality, were no longer valid. As regarded the question of the Exarchate, to which I had also called his attention, His Excellency told me that the Exarch was about to press the Porte to consent to the establishment at Constantinople of the Synod and Mixed Council, sanctioned by the Firman of 1870. Whether, supposing that this consent were obtained, the members of the existing Synod, which sat at Sofia, would be allowed to sit in the new Synod, side by side with the Macedonian Bishops, or whether the two Synods would be kept distinct, he could not say; but, in any case, the Exarch would remain the Supreme Head of the Church both in Macedonia and in Bulgaria. There was no reason why such an arrangement should not hold good even after the erection of the Principality into an independent Kingdom; and, His Excellency added, Bulgaria could not be expected to put up indefinitely with her present state of Vassalage.

In conversation with my French Colleague, General Paprikoff appears to have gone somewhat further. Speaking of the present situation in Macedonia, His Excellency stated that if, when the Turkish Parliament met next November, no satisfaction had been given to the claims of the Bulgarian element in Macedonia, the Bulgarian Government would find itself forced to depart from its present attitude of reserve. Public opinion, he declared, would expect it to do something and, as war was out of the question, the Proclamation of Independence would be the only course left open to it.

That the Government has been seriously considering the question is, I think, beyond a doubt; and the unfortunate dispute, which has arisen respecting the diplomatic status of the Bulgarian Agent at Constantinople, on which I reported in my Telegram No. 17 of the 14th instant,⁽¹⁾ will tend to strengthen the hands of what may be called the Court Party in the Cabinet. The action of the Government in instructing M. Guéchoff to leave Constantinople has been approved by every section of the Press and, while there is no disposition to give exaggerated importance to the incident, speculation is rife as to the motives, which prompted the new Liberal Turkish Government to adopt so provocative an attitude towards Bulgaria. The opinion appears generally to prevail that the incident will be eventually settled through the friendly intervention of the Ambassadors at Constantinople. General Paprikoff, however, told me this morning that the Bulgarian Government would not yield an inch of their original pretensions and that, until they had obtained satisfaction, they would not receive the new Imperial Ottoman Commissary, except in the capacity of a Commissioner of Vakoufs. I informed General Paprikoff of the view taken of the question

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

at Constantinople, as reported in Sir G. Lowther's Telegram No. 263 of yesterday,⁽²⁾ but His Excellency maintained that the Bulgarian Agent had always been invited to the official dinners and receptions formerly given at Yildiz. Technically speaking the Porte may claim to be acting within its strict rights, as I believe it has never recognized M. Guéchoff or his predecessors in office as anything but simple "Agents," without the prefix of "Diplomatic." Nevertheless the principle, which it now lays down would not appear to have been rigorously applied in the past, and the Turkish Government will make a mistake, if at a moment, like the present, it brings home to the Bulgarian nation the disadvantages attaching to the position of a Vassal State.

Some curiosity has also been aroused by a visit, which M. Stancioff paid to M. Isvolsky at Carlsbad some ten days ago; by the departure about the same time of the President of the Council, M. Malinoff, for Paris, and by the official visit which Prince Ferdinand is to pay the Emperor of Austria at Buda-Pesth on the 23rd of this month. In some quarters it is believed that the object of these various visits is to sound the respective Governments and that Prince Ferdinand's secret desire is to come to an arrangement with Austria-Hungary, under which the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovine might proceed *pari passu* with the Declaration of Independence. Of what is likely to be discussed by M. Malinoff at Paris and by Prince Ferdinand at Buda-Pesth I personally know nothing; but I hear from a private and confidential source that M. Stancioff did broach the subject of Independence to M. Isvolsky at Carlsbad, and that he received no encouragement. While giving him the usual counsels of patience and prudence, M. Isvolsky, I am told, further advised him that it would be a mistake for Bulgaria to reduce her military expenditure, as a strong army might be of great service to her in the future.

In my despatch No. 79, Very Confidential, of the 7th of August of last year,⁽³⁾ I discussed the question of Independence in all its bearings. I would now only record my belief that, with the establishment of Constitutional Government in Turkey, the severance of the ties, which bind Bulgaria to that Empire, would be to the advantage of all concerned, provided that it could be accomplished by an amicable arrangement between the two Governments. Her present somewhat anomalous position of a semi-independent State affords Bulgaria facilities of various kinds for mixing herself up in all that passes on the other side of the frontier; while the question of Independence, if disposed of one year, invariably presents itself the next and will have to be faced sooner or later—perhaps even under circumstances more unfavourable than at present. As a necessary condition to her transformation into a Kingdom, Bulgaria would have to renounce all idea of any further interference in the affairs of Macedonia and to content herself with the development of her internal resources. Such an arrangement, could it but be brought about by diplomatic means, would, I venture to think, undoubtedly promote the cause of peace in the Balkans.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 356-9, No. 261.]

No. 267.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Therapia, September 25, 1908.

D. 5 P.M.

R. 5.40 P.M.

F.O. 33221/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 273.)

Circular note received from Porte stating that railway line passing through Eastern Roumelia has been occupied by Bulgarian troops. As this action affects rights guaranteed to Turkish Government by the Treaty of Berlin, Minister for Foreign

Affairs requests that British Government may "make its voice heard at Sophia," with a view to the restoration of line to the Company.⁽¹⁾

MINUTE.

Now that the Turks have done the conciliatory thing about the Bulgarian Agent, they ought to be supported about the railway and if Russia agrees we should act at Sophia at once.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [For a brief summary of this dispute, v. extract from memorandum by Mr. (Sir J. A. C.) Tilley of March 1, 1909, *infra*, pp. 817-8, *App. I, cp. G.P. XXVI, I, p. 71, sqq.*]

No. 268.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Sophia, September 27, 1908.

F.O. 33357/31738/08/44A.

D. 4.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 25.)

R. 7.35 P.M.

Your telegram No. 21: Oriental Railway.⁽¹⁾

Austrian and German Agents received instructions to-day to make official representations, but none of my other colleagues.

President of Council and Minister of Commerce have joined Prince Ferdinand at Vienna, where question is being treated with Company. President of Council is expected back to-morrow or next day.

I do not believe Bulgarian Government, despite their undiplomatic procedure, contemplate policy of spoliation. From conversation with Minister of Finance I gather that they desire to obtain a lease of line, so as to prevent it being worked in a manner prejudicial to national and strategical interests. Public opinion throughout country strongly supports the Government, and railway question even more than Gueschoff incident⁽²⁾ has strengthened movement in favour of independence. If forced to yield to foreign pressure the Government may resign, and a Ministerial crisis brought about in this manner would be most unfortunate at present moment.

I think it would be well to await result of negotiations, so that we may be in a better position to judge nature of advice to be tendered. Nothing has transpired as to what passed at Buda-Pesth, but the demonstrative advances made to Prince Ferdinand may dispose His Royal Highness to bow to Austria's wishes in the railway question.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [v. Mr. (Sir J. A. C.) Tilley's memorandum, *infra*, p. 816: M. Guéšov, Bulgarian Agent at Constantinople, not having been asked to the dinner given on September 12 by the Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs, left Constantinople as a protest under instructions from Sofia, *cp. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 68-72, and supra*, p. 363, No. 266.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria and his wife visited Budapest September 23-25 and complimentary speeches were exchanged between Prince Ferdinand and the Emperor King Francis Joseph.]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/399.

(No. 132.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. September 28, 1908.

R. October 5, 1908.

After his visit to Baron d'Aehrenthal at Buchlau which I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 124 of the 8th inst[ant]⁽¹⁾. M. Iswolsky proceeded to Berchtesgaden where he saw the German Secretary of State, Herr von Schön, and then, travelling by Munich, went on to Desio last Monday to stay with M. Tittoni. These interviews between M. Iswolsky and the Ministers of the countries forming the Triple Alliance attract much attention here, but, excepting for the short communiqués made to the Press, little or nothing is naturally known to the public of what actually took place. An article, however, published in the "Nene Freie Presse," entitled "The journeys of M. Iswolsky" (based on information from a diplomatic source), of which I annex a translation, is not without interest as it shows signs of official inspiration:—

"The last traces of the discord which arose from the announcement of the Sanjak railway project were removed at Buchlau, and it can be asserted that, as far as railway concessions are concerned interest in the construction of new lines of communication between Turkey and Europe still remains, but their fate lies now in the hands of the Turkish Parliament which, however, cannot terminate engagements already made. Taking one thing with another the views of Baron d'Aehrenthal and M. Iswolsky in regard to the position in the East were in complete harmony. The situation has changed so much that nothing could be tacked on to the Münzsteg Agreements in Buchlau, and the negotiations proceeded in the spirit of the *entente* concluded when the Emperor visited St. Petersburg in 1897, and it appears that the two statesmen spoke in the sense of it so that the old understanding is to continue in its leading features. It was agreed that it was necessary to wait and see how the Turkish Parliament behaves and whether the Young Turk movement is sympathetic towards it. The possibilities that everything will not develop smoothly, that the army may change its views and that the people may become chauvinistic must be reckoned with. Such a violent reaction as has occurred in Persia need not be anticipated in the event of nationalist tendencies getting the upper hand, for the leaders would know perfectly well that if foreigners or native Christians were in danger the Powers would

⁽¹⁾ [Received 21 September. Signed for the Ambassador, Dayrell Crackanthorpe. The following is the only passage of any importance:—

"An interesting fact to be recorded about this meeting is that it was, as I have learned, only arranged after considerable difficulty, both Ministers considering that the one should visit the other. Baron d'Aehrenthal wished the meeting to take place at Vienna, while M. Iswolsky was of opinion that Baron d'Aehrenthal should visit him at Carlsbad. At last, due weight having doubtless been given to the consideration that much harm might result were no meeting to take place at all, it was arranged that the two Ministers should see one another on what might be called neutral ground, viz., on Count Berthold's [*sic*] estate at Buchlau. As you will have gathered from my despatch No. 114 of 27th August, the relations between the two statesmen have considerably cooled down of late, and though recent events in Turkey have doubtless to a great extent contributed to a reconciliation between their respective policies in Macedonia, yet the fact should not be overlooked that both Ministers are possessed of considerable mistrust one for the other. M. Iswolsky because he considers that Baron d'Aehrenthal played him false in the matter of the Sanjak Railway and the Judicial Reforms, and Baron d'Aehrenthal, because, as I am confidentially informed, he holds the opinion that M. Iswolsky is obsessed by a wish for personal prestige and is in pursuit of a purely personal policy. This is a factor which cannot be ignored so long as these two statesmen continue to represent the foreign policies of their respective countries. v. G.P. XXVI, I, p. 30 n sqq.]

In the first place he was severely censured for having entertained even for one moment that Austria could, of her own initiative, modify a Treaty stipulation, and for having informed Baron d'Aehrenthal that Russia would not oppose such a step. He was further blamed for having ignored the interests of the Balkan Slavs, who would consider themselves injured by the definite incorporation of the two provinces into the Austrian Monarchy, and for having assumed a somewhat undignified and unworthy position in apparently expressing his readiness to bargain over the matter. Subsequently, after further reflection, the Russian press condemned absolutely the character of the compensation which it was believed that M. Isvolsky was seeking for Russia. It was perhaps on this point that M. Isvolsky was exposed to the rudest of deceptions. He had assumed, and had perhaps some historical justification for assuming, that if he could procure untrammelled egress for her ships of war through the Straits he would have accomplished an act which would have been universally applauded. But he had not foreseen, and indeed it is difficult that he should have foreseen, that the Russian public viewed the Dardanelles question with comparative indifference. As regards the question itself, it was argued that from the purely Russian standpoint, viewed as a matter of practical advantage, it was preferable to leave both egress from and ingress into the Straits in the position of the *status quo*. The egress would, in any case until the Russian navy became an important factor, be of little real value, as the comparatively small Russian squadron stationed in the Black Sea was not likely to be able to exercise an important influence in the settlement of difficulties in Mediterranean waters. On the other hand it was esteemed improbable that freedom of egress would be allowed without corresponding liberty of ingress to the other Maritime Powers, and this would expose the Russian littoral to the Black Sea to the attack of powerful navies. Furthermore, the Russian press wished that Russia should not condone the act of Austria by seeking for compensation for herself. They desired that, if a Conference were to be held, Russia could enter it with perfectly clean hands and with no selfish aims.

No. 271.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, September 29, 1908.

F.O. 33786/31738/08/44A.

D. 3.37 P.M.

Tel. (No. 180.) Confidential.

R. 7.10 P.M.

In regard to questions between Bulgaria and Turkey, my impression is that Russian Government will be inclined to take benevolent view of action of former, as, since the visit of Prince Ferdinand to Buda-Pesth and honours accorded him, they may fear Austria will be in high favour at Sophia, and in a measure supplant Russian influence. This would not be pleasing here, and efforts would be made to counteract such a possibility. I think that attitude which the Russian Government seem disposed to adopt in regard to railway question indicates this. Moreover, Russian Government would view with comparative equanimity modifications in Berlin Treaty, for which naturally they have no affection.

Further, although they assert that they regard new situation in Turkey with benevolent interest, I do not think in reality they are much pleased with it. Firstly, they expected that old system would have gradually led to the curtailment of Turkish rule in Europe to the benefit of Slav populations, and, secondly, they apprehend that a strong Turkey with Liberal tendencies may lead to a movement among Russian Moslem races which might be embarrassing. Russian Government were willing a short time ago to join in admonishing Bulgaria to raise no embarrassing questions. I do not notice that they are so eager to do so since the Buda-Pesth meeting, and although, of course, Russia is anxious that no serious complications should arise, I think that she would be glad to see pending questions settled in favour of Bulgaria rather than of Turkey. I venture to submit these personal impressions.

No. 272.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 33789/31738/08/44A.

Sophia, D. September 29, 1908, 8.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 28.)

R. September 30, 1908, 8 A.M.

Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 176: Gueschoff incident.⁽¹⁾

My Russian colleague was to speak to-day in sense indicated by Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs. He has throughout been opposed to idea of official representations, more especially since Prince Ferdinand's visit to Buda-Pesth, and has so far received no instructions.

I strongly advised Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon to return conciliatory answer to Grand Vizier's telegram, referred to in my telegram No. 23,⁽²⁾ and warned him that contrary course would arouse suspicion that Bulgaria wished to create trouble. If Bulgarian Agent were to return, Porte would be probably chary of raising a similar incident in future.

His Excellency gave me the assurance that Bulgaria would do its utmost to support reform movement in Turkey, and that independence was not contemplated at present. He was most unyielding on question of status of Agent, and I fear decision to be taken to-morrow by Council of Ministers will not be satisfactory.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.] It reports communication to the Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs of a conciliatory telegram from the Grand Vizier expressing regret at the Gueschoff incident; and refers to a previous telegram which appeared to have been of a less conciliatory character.]

No. 273.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34349/31738/08/44A.

(No. 66.) Confidential.

Belgrade, D. September 30, 1908.

Sir,

R. October 5, 1908.

I have the honour to report that having announced my return to Belgrade to the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, His Excellency invited me to an interview this morning at his office.

Monsieur Milovanovitch told me that during his leave of absence, partly spent at Marienbad, he had had opportunities of speaking to Monsieur Iswolsky and to Baron Aehrenthal, and that, as regards Servian interests, the impression made upon him by these conversations was most unfavourable. He had in fact arrived at the conviction that the Austro-Hungarian Government intended to proclaim the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina very shortly, and that all the necessary preliminary steps were being taken for that purpose. Monsieur Iswolsky had gone so far as to admit that he believed this to be the case, and Baron Aehrenthal had avoided the question of the occupied provinces in a pointed manner. Monsieur Milovanovitch thought that the moment chosen for the proclamation would probably be the 2nd of December, the 60th anniversary of the Emperor Francis Joseph's reign, when the new provinces would as it were be presented to the aged sovereign as a gift from the nation, thus giving the matter a personal character, and taking advantage of the universal esteem and veneration, in which His Imperial Majesty was held throughout Europe, to disarm criticism.

His Excellency then proceeded to say, in a very serious tone, that the effect of this annexation in Servia would be incalculable, and might lead to a veritable catastrophe. Difficult as the position of Servia now was, the national sentiment was sustained by the hope of eventual expansion. Servia asked for nothing at present but that the *status quo* should be maintained, and that no final settlement in favour of another Power should be permitted in regard to a heritage which she regarded as her own. If this were allowed the Servian nation would despair of finding any issue from their present helpless condition, and the counsels of despair might prove eminently dangerous.

There were many indeed who even now were of opinion that a warlike adventure, even with the certainty of defeat, would not place the country in any worse position, from the national point of view, than it would be in if finally deprived of all hope of development, and that even if the Austrian armies swept Serbia and she was annexed to the Dual Monarchy, her patriots would at least have the satisfaction of feeling that they were united with their brethren now under Austrian and Hungarian rule.

In reply to an observation on my part that Bosnia and the Herzegovina had been virtually part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire ever since their pacification, and that from a sober and practical point of view, apart from sentiment, their formal annexation would make little difference to Serbia, Monsieur Milovanovitch said that the national sentiment was not a thing which could be disregarded. From every movement which had recently taken place on the Balkan Peninsula the other Balkan States had derived some advantage: Bulgaria had obtained Eastern Roumelia, Greece had practically acquired Crete; while Serbia had been obliged to rest satisfied with vague hopes for the future. If these hopes were finally cut off by the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, the Servian people would become desperate, and the result of that feeling could not be foreseen.

Passing to other subjects of immediate interest, His Excellency stated that the Servian element in Macedonia had accepted the Young Turkish movement very cordially and were perfectly willing to give their loyal co-operation to the attempt to introduce constitutional Government, a course in which the Servian Government would encourage them by all means in their power.

As regards the question of Bulgarian independence, Serbia was entirely disinterested, and if Bulgaria were to be proclaimed an independent kingdom to-morrow the Servian Government would telegraph their congratulations.

In conclusion Monsieur Milovanovitch again begged me to call your most serious attention to the question of the proposed annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary, as he was convinced that the effect which it would produce in Serbia would be calamitous.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

No. 274.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson:—

Foreign Office, September 30, 1908.

. . . .⁽²⁾ The relations between Bulgaria and Turkey are causing us some anxiety. We want to act as much as possible in co-operation with Russia, especially as we feel that the Bulgarians are being egged on in their aggressive intentions by the Austrians, who like fishing in troubled waters. Although the situation is not at present critical in any way, still it may easily become so, and I think we must be very wary in the manner in which we approach the Bulgarians, so as to give them no pretext for going to war, or for declaring their independence. The latter contingency would be very likely to create every sort of complication, since Greece and Serbia would probably at once want compensation of some kind or another, and Austria might find the moment convenient for definitely annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Isvolsky is to arrive here on the 9th. I shall be very curious to see what impression he makes on the Ministers with whom he is brought in contact. I have my doubts as to whether it will be a very favourable one.

Y[ou]rs ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [The first part of this letter is omitted, as it refers to the situation in Afghanistan and to Persian railway schemes.]

No. 275.

*Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.**Sophia, October 1, 1908.*

F.O. 34000/31738/08/44A.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 29.) Secret.

R. 6.45 P.M.

Following information has been given me on condition it be treated as strictly secret. I am forbidden to mention source, but it is one in which I can place confidence:—

On Tuesday Council of Ministers decided to summon Sobranje by telegrams addressed to each individual member; to arrange for spontaneous declaration of independence by Assembly, and to call 40,000 more reservists.

On Wednesday Council of Ministers in an all day's sitting discussed question of future title of Prince, and decided in favour of "Tsar of Bulgaria." General mobilization was also recommended, but no definite decision was taken. Prince Ferdinand was to remain in Hungary so that he might appear to have had no hand in declaration of independence, which was to be represented as a national act.

A telegram was dispatched to him on Tuesday asking for his final sanction, but no answer has so far been received. It would appear that Prince and Ministers are each anxious to throw responsibility of step contemplated on the other, and it is still possible that His Royal Highness' courage may fail him at the last moment.

My informant vouches for accuracy of above, but I cannot guarantee this. Prince Ferdinand is expected back in a few days.

MINUTES.

For assurance of Bulgarian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that independence was not contemplated at present, see Sir G. Buchanan's Tel[egram] No. 28 of Sept. 29.⁽¹⁾

R. P. M.

In spite of the statement to Sir G. Buchanan by the Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] that a declaration of Bulgarian independence is not contemplated at present, the news contained in this tel[egram] is disquieting. It may not be true, but on the other hand, if it is true, inaction on our part would be open to criticism if we do nothing to avert it. As the matter is urgent, necessitating immediate action I have had this tel[egram] repeated to the Embassies at the Courts of the Signatory Powers, and I have sent instr[uctio]ns to the Ambassadors to urge the Gov[ernmen]ts to which they are accredited to deprecate at Sofia such a step as likely to lead to serious consequences.

I have also sent a tel[egram] to Sofia taking note of the denial of the Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] that independence is contemplated at present and instr[uctin]g Sir G. Buchanan to point out that such a step is to be deprecated.

As I have been unable to submit these tel[egram]s I hope they may meet with the S[ecretary] of State's approval.

C. H.

I approve.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [r. *supra*, p. 369, No. 272.]

No. 276.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34329/31738/08/44A.

(No. 135.)

Vienna, D. October 1, 1908.

Sir,

R. October 5, 1908.

Since my despatch No. 125 of the 18th ultimo⁽¹⁾ little or no light has been thrown on the alleged intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Government to annex the Provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Rumours on the subject have been rife in the

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Press. It is stated that all the Powers have consented to the annexation except Great Britain, who alone makes difficulties; also that when the Delegations meet next week a scheme for the annexation of the Provinces will at once be submitted to them for their approval. I learn from a reliable source that the Austrian Government desires to proceed at once to annexation, but that the Hungarian Government are opposed to any alterations. However this may be, it seems unlikely that anything definite will be made public before the meeting of the Delegations, when the question must come under discussion and the intentions of the Government be revealed.

Some comment was excited by an order issued last week by the military authorities that the wives and children of the officers stationed in the three garrisons in the Sanjak of Novi Bazar were to return home. In explanation, however, of this order a statement appeared in the Press to the effect that it was contrary to the regulations for officers to have their families with them in the Sanjak, that these regulations had of late been allowed to lapse and that, although it was advisable in view of possible disturbances to reinforce them, there was not the slightest reason for imagining that any military operations were contemplated.

In connection with the question of the occupied Provinces a semi-official announcement which appeared yesterday regarding the future appointment of the spiritual Head of the Mahommedans is not without interest. The history of this question is briefly as follows:—

In 1900 the Bosnian Mahommedans petitioned the authorities in Sarajevo for self-government in respect to religious and educational matters. The Government received this request in a friendly manner and discussed the matter thoroughly with the Mahommedan population of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the years 1901 and 1907 (see my despatch No. 112 of August 9th, 1907). This year a complete understanding has been arrived at not only in regard to autonomy in education and religion but also on the question of the *Menschura*, viz., granting of full powers to the religious Head of the Bosnian Mahommedans by the Sheik-ul-Islam in Constantinople. The Mahommedans of the provinces will now have to nominate three persons for the post of *Reis-ul-Ulema* or Head of the Church. Their names will be submitted to the Emperor of Austria who will select one of them. The name of the Emperor's nominee will then be submitted through diplomatic channels to the Sheik-ul-Islam, who will then issue the *Menschura*.

The settlement of this long outstanding dispute cannot fail to produce a most favourable impression on the Turkish inhabitants of the two Provinces in regard to their Austrian masters. Seeing that the matter has been under discussion for eight years it is somewhat significant that a solution has been found just now.

I have, &c.

(For H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador),

LANCELOT D. CARNEGIE.

No. 277.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Sophia, October 2, 1908.

F.O. 34128/31738/08/44A.

D. 1:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 30.)

R. 6:45 P.M.

My telegram No. 29, Secret.⁽¹⁾

I hear from same secret source that Prince Ferdinand told President of the Council at Vienna that he was determined this time to take decisive step. He has, however, so far returned no answer to telegram sent him by Ministers, and they will not declare independence without his express sanction. They telegraphed last

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 371, No. 275.]

night to the effect that if he did not return by Sunday it would be too late, and idea would have to be abandoned. I am inclined to believe that Prince Ferdinand will not have the nerve to say the decisive word.

I have failed to induce my Russian colleague to tell me line which he is taking. I hear, however, in strict confidence from my French colleague that Russian Agent has, by order of his Government, strongly discouraged proclamation of independence, declaring that Russia could not consent to Bulgaria provoking a grave crisis in the Near East for her own personal ends. Russian Agent also told my French colleague that Russia wished to show that Austria was not the mistress in the Balkans, but he added as his private opinion that, were independence proclaimed, Russia would be the first to recognize it.

Baron Aehrenthal, I am informed, gave Prince Ferdinand no direct encouragement, but at the same time did not say anything to discourage idea of independence.

No. 278.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 34000/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 2, 1908.

Tel. (No. 144.)

D. 1.40 P.M.

Sir G. Buchanan's tel[egram] No. 29.⁽¹⁾

You should inform Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are much impressed by the current rumours that the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t are seriously contemplating a declaration of Bulgarian independence in the near future. It seems desirable to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] that the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t should be seriously warned of the gravity of such action of which it is impossible to foresee the consequences. You should urge the Gov[ernmen]t to give immediate instr[uctio]ns to their Rep[resentati]ve at Sofia to strongly deprecate any step of this kind.

[Repeated to Sir E. Goschen, Vienna (No. 80), and to Sir A. Nicolson (No. 413), October 2, 1908.]

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 371, No. 275.]

No. 279.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 34000/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 2, 1908.

Tel. (No. 81.)

D. 1.40 P.M.

My immediately preceding tel[egram].⁽¹⁾

At end add following words: "and to use all their influence with the Prince of Bulgaria to discountenance the idea."

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 34000/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 35.)

Foreign Office, October 2, 1908.

Your tel[egram]s Nos. 28 and 29.⁽¹⁾

You should inform Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] take note with satisfaction of his statement to you that the question of a declaration of independence is not contemplated at present. You should add in a friendly manner that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have been much impressed by the persistent rumours current that such a step was meditated, and they would strongly deprecate such action as likely to create a grave situation the consequences of which it is impossible to foresee. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] hope that a solution of the railway difficulty may be found in the suggestion outlined in my tel[egram] No. 31 of yesterday.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 369, 371. Nos. 272, 275.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The text of the autograph letter from the Emperor Francis Joseph, dated September 29, 1908, to King Edward is in Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 632. It was brought by Count Mensdorff, who saw Sir Charles Hardinge on October 3 (*v. infra*, pp. 377–8, No. 287) and subsequently proceeded to Balmoral, where “the King received him with great coolness,” *ib.* II, p. 633; *cp. also infra*, pp. 827 and 830, *Ed. notes.*]

No. 281.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34245/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 48.)

Paris, October 3, 1908.

On receipt last night of your telegram No. 144⁽¹⁾ I wrote a letter to the Political Director which I sent early this morning telling him what my instructions were and asking to be received by the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] as soon as possible this morning or in his absence by M. Louis himself.

The Political Director replied that he would see me at 11:30. He told me that he had informed the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] of the instructions which I had received, and H[is] E[xcellency] would see me at 6:30 this evening. He could not do so earlier owing to other pressing engagements. M. Louis had, however, been desired by H[is] E[xcellency] to inform me meanwhile that the Austrian Ambassador had yesterday applied for an interview and had been received by the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] early this morning. The Ambassador had announced to H[is] E[xcellency] that the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t intends to annex Bosnia Herzegovina whilst renouncing the advantages with regard to the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar to which Austria is entitled under the Treaty of Berlin.

Austrian Ambassador informed M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t had rec[eive]d concurrence in annexation from the Cabinets of St. Petersburg, Berlin, Rome.

In these circumstances M. Louis asked me whether I thought H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would desire to proceed with the proposed representations at Sofia as no doubt proclamation of the independence of Bulgaria is evidently a preconceived

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 373, No. 278.]

arrangement with Austria and probably with Germany also. I said that personally for sake of public opinion and the position of England and France in Turkey it would be well that they should make the proposed representations at Sofia even if Gov[ernmen]ts of Austria, Germany and Russia abstained.

No. 282.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Sophia, October 3, 1908.

F.O. 34244/31738/08/44A.

D. 1.30 p.m.

Tel. (No. 35.)

R. 3 p.m.

My tel[egram] No. 34.⁽¹⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] having deferred departure I have made friendly representations in sense of your tel[egram] No. 35.⁽²⁾ I expressed painful surprise at his reply on Railway question and begged him to reconsider decision. Otherwise it would lend itself to worst construction now that Turkey had accepted our suggestion. He said it was impossible unless Ministry resigned. I asked whether there was any prospect of such a solution. He answered in the negative.

He avoided question of independence so I warned him that such a step might involve Bulgaria in a disastrous war with a united Turkey and that other Powers might intervene in a manner prejudicial to her. I asked (?) authority to give report formal denial. He said that he would consult his colleagues and give me answer by to-morrow. Government has not yet sent reply on Gueschoff incident but M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] expressed hope that it would be satisfactorily settled. I believe my Russian colleague has urged its reference to Powers.

(Sent to Constantinople.)

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 374, No. 280.]

No. 283.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, October 3, 1908.

F.O. 34259/31738/08/44A.

D. 7.56 p.m.

Tel. (No. 182.)

R. 9.15 p.m.

Bulgaria. Your telegram No. 413.⁽¹⁾

Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed his pleasure at request which I made to him, as he had been for the last three days using the strongest language at Sophia with a view to preventing Bulgarian Government from taking step which at this moment was an act of folly. He had told them plainly that if they declared independence they must bear all the consequences, and that Russia would not move a finger to help them if Turkish troops occupied their territory. He had succeeded in inducing the Bulgarian Government to pause, but only for a few days, as they seem intent on making declaration without loss of time, and he considers situation as critical. He would be most grateful if His Majesty's Government would support representations of Russian Government, and I told him that they would undoubtedly do so. He sees no harm in letting Bulgarian Government know that if they waited patiently they would doubtless obtain their desires, but it is from the Powers that they must receive what they wish, and must not embark on an adventure at the most unpropitious of all moments and full of perilous consequences.

He said that Roumania was quietly arming, and he was sure Turkey would be compelled to take extreme measures against Bulgaria if she declared independence. No one could foretell what would be consequences if once a shot were fired in Balkans.

⁽¹⁾ [Circular. *v. supra*, p. 373, No. 278.]

He said that he thought that he had explained his uneasiness to me last Wednesday. He certainly did not do so, as he (?) made a mere casual allusion to reports of Bulgarian independence, and formerly he had not treated matter seriously. He has evidently received similar news to that communicated by Sir G. Buchanan, and is now really alarmed.

No. 284.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Therapia, October 3, 1908.

F.O. 34256/31738/08/44.

D. 9.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 289.)

R. 11 P.M.

Your telegram No. 262 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

I have communicated message to Grand Vizier. His Highness said he earnestly desired peaceful solution of the present difficulties with Bulgaria, and that he felt confident that this result would be obtained unless Bulgaria tried to force acceptance of unreasonable demands on Turkey. He had been (at) great pains to control press and to prevent any public excitement and consequent demonstrations, thus endangering chances of peaceful solution. His Highness said he deeply appreciated efforts made by you to induce Bulgarian Government to revert to the line of legality in conformity with existing Treaties

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It advised Turkey to appeal to the Signatory Powers "in the event of Bulgaria showing an irreconcilable attitude" on the two questions governed by the Treaty of Berlin, and also urged moderation.]

No. 285.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, October 3, 1908.

F.O. 34321/31738/08/44A.

D. 9.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 49.) Confidential.

R. 11.45 P.M.

Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The following are the details of communication made by Austrian Ambassador given me this evening by the Minister for Foreign Affairs, additional to those I received this morning from the Political Director, and reported in my telegram No. 48 of to-day⁽¹⁾ :—

The populations of Bosnia and Herzegovina having demanded representative institutions, which, in view of proclamation of Constitution in Turkey, it is impossible for the Austro-Hungarian Government to refuse to grant, and it being also impossible for the Emperor of Austria to give a Constitution to provinces under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Turkey, it has been decided to treat them as autonomous provinces within the dominions of the Emperor-King, pending a decision as to their exact position in those dominions, viz., whether to appertain to the Crown of Austria or to that of Hungary. Having regard to the change to be made in the position of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Austria-Hungary will renounce right under the Treaty of Berlin to garrison Sanjak of Novi-Bazar.

Austrian Ambassador informed Minister for Foreign Affairs that the intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Government have the concurrence of the Cabinets of St. Petersburg, Berlin, and Rome, and he asked for an audience of the President

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 374–5, No. 281.]

of the Republic. At this audience he communicated a letter from the Emperor of Austria,⁽²⁾ in which His Majesty (I learn, but not from M. Pichon) says new state of things as regards Bosnia and Herzegovina will be announced on Tuesday next, and the Austro-Hungarian troops occupying the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar will be forthwith withdrawn. The word annexation was not used by the Ambassador.

M. Isvolsky was to have arrived in Paris to-day, and Austrian Ambassador told M. Pichon that he imagined French Government had already been informed by M. Isvolsky of the intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Government, and of concurrence in them of Russian Government.

Austrian Ambassador stated to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that a letter from the Emperor of Austria to the King of England announcing the intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Government would not reach His Majesty till Monday or Tuesday.

Minister for Foreign Affairs wonders what are to be the rewards to Russia and to Italy for their concurrence in this Austro-German arrangement for a breach by Austro-Hungary of her Treaty engagements.

⁽²⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXVI, I, p. 101.* The note there gives the date erroneously as 9th instead of 3rd October. It has been stated that this letter should have been presented on the 5th. But Sir Charles Hardinge (*v. infra*, No. 287) was privately informed on the 3rd by Count Mensdorff of Austria-Hungary's intention.]

No. 286.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, October 3, 1908.

F.O. 34247/31738/08/44A.

D. 11.25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 50.) Confidential.

R. 11.55 P.M.

Bulgaria.

Minister for Foreign Affairs' information from the French Agent at Sophia is that Prince Ferdinand will arrive at Rustchuk to-morrow night, and will go at once to Tirnovo, where independence of Bulgaria will be proclaimed on Monday.⁽¹⁾ He says it is too late to prevent this proclamation, which has evidently been arranged between the Austrian and Bulgarian Governments with the concurrence of the German, Russian, and Italian Governments. Minister for Foreign Affairs will, however, instruct the French Agent at Sophia to concert with his British colleague in order to make to the Bulgarian Government the representations which His Majesty's Government have suggested in your telegram No. 144 of the 2nd instant⁽²⁾ (which I read to him) deprecating such a proceeding. He thinks that such a representation, in which German, Russian, and Italian Governments will not be likely to join, may perhaps be useful as regards relations of France and England with Turkey.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 86-7.*]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 373, No. 278.]

No. 287.

*Memorandum respecting an Interview between Sir C. Hardinge and
Count Mensdorff [October 3, 1908].⁽¹⁾*

F.O. 35853/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 3, 1908.

Count Mensdorff called on me this morning by appointment.

He brought with him a private letter from Baron d'Aehrenthal, in which the latter announces to me privately the intention of the Austrian Government to

⁽¹⁾ [Copies of this and following document enclosed in Despatch No. 114 to Sir E. Goschen of 20 October, 1908.]

proclaim very shortly the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. To compensate for this annexation the Austrian Government declare their intention of withdrawing altogether from the Sandjak of Novi Bazar, thus abolishing the dual régime which has existed in that province since 1878. The reasons given by Baron d'Aehrenthal for this action on his part are the necessity for giving Bosnia and Herzegovina some sort of constitution, so that these two Provinces should not remain as the only two Provinces in the whole of Europe which are not in enjoyment of constitutional privileges, and also on account of the agitation which is carried on in the Sandjak of Novi Bazar and the two occupied provinces by the Servians.

Count Mensdorff asked me what I thought the opinion of His Majesty's Government would be. I replied that it was impossible for me to say at present what your views would be, but that I could add my personal opinion that it is not so much the proclamation of annexation which we should fear, but its consequences. I told Count Mensdorff that we had felt alarm and are still anxious as to whether Bulgaria intends to proclaim her independence, since, were she to do so, it is not unlikely that other Powers, both small and great, might ask for compensation—always at the expense of Turkey. This would create a most dangerous development in the Balkan Peninsula, of which nobody could foresee the consequences. It was to be feared that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina would be likely to encourage the Bulgarians in this sense, and, from that point of view, I thought it would be very much better if this action upon which the Austrian Government seem to have decided, could have been postponed for at least a couple of months, until the present crisis in the Balkan Peninsula had subsided. I asked Count Mensdorff what he thought the attitude of Russia and of Italy would be in the circumstances. He told me very privately that the impression of the Austrian Government was that the attitude of Russia and Italy would be favourable and friendly.

I told Count Mensdorff that I would send a copy of Baron d'Aehrenthal's letter to you to-night, and that I hoped to see you on Monday, when you would be able to make any comments that might seem to you desirable. He told me that he is going to Balmoral to-morrow night, and that he is the bearer of a private letter from the Emperor of Austria to The King, informing The King of the substance of Aehrenthal's letter. I gathered that the official step to be taken by the Austrian Government will be made very shortly.

Count Mensdorff told me that the Austrian Government are very anxious that the railway question in Bulgaria should be concluded. I told him, therefore, of the step that we have taken with the Turkish Government, and of the solution which we are now pressing on the Bulgarian Government. I asked him to do what he could to get satisfactory instructions sent to the Austrian Representative at Sofia. He promised that he would do this, and I gave him a few details.

C. H.⁽²⁾

(²) [Count Metternich reports some views of Sir Charles Hardinge on 6 October, *G.P.* XXVI, I, pp. 106-7.]

No. 288.

Communication from Count Mensdorff, October 3, 1908.

Baron von Aehrenthal to Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. 95853/31738/08/44.

Mon cher ami,

Vienne, le 28 Septembre, 1908.

Le Comte Mensdorff qui vient de partir pour Londres est chargé de Vous transmettre officiellement la copie d'une dépêche destinée à informer le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique de certaines décisions importantes prises par le Cabinet de Vienne à l'égard du Sandjak de Novibazar et des Provinces occupées.

Il s'agit de la prochaine annexion de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine et de notre renoncement aux droits que le traité de Berlin nous a conférés dans le Sandjak.

Il me tient à cœur d'ajouter à la communication officielle de ces faits quelques lignes personnelles pour Vous éclairer entièrement sur la situation et pour Vous expliquer d'une manière plus ample les motifs qui ont amené les résolutions que j'ai mentionnées plus haut.

Depuis que sur l'initiative des Délégués Anglais le sort de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine a été, en 1878, confié à la Monarchie dans le but "d'y établir une administration stable et forte," comme s'exprimait Lord Salisbury, ces deux pays n'ont cessé d'être l'objet des soins assidus du Gouvernement austro-hongrois; grâce à un travail constant et fructueux ces provinces ont peu à peu atteint un haut degré de culture matérielle et intellectuelle; le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal suivant ces progrès d'un œil bienveillant et attentif et informé des désirs intimes de la population s'était depuis longtemps occupé de la question de doter ces provinces d'un régime autonome et constitutionnel; nous avions à cet effet l'intention de procéder par étapes; l'autonomie des communautés rurales avait fait le commencement, et l'œuvre entreprise devait être couronnée par la convocation d'une diète à Sarajevo.

L'évolution en Turquie a hâté la marche des événements: ce que nous avons pris en vue pour un avenir plus ou moins éloigné, nous ne croyons pas devoir le refuser plus longtemps aux habitants de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine en présence de la nouvelle ère politique inaugurée à Constantinople.

Nous ne saurions cependant procéder à l'octroi d'un régime constitutionnel pour la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine avant d'avoir réglé d'une manière définitive la situation politique de ces provinces; il est évident que la réunion d'une diète à Sarajevo ne peut être proclamée que par le pouvoir souverain.

Voilà donc les raisons impérieuses qui nous ont obligés de précipiter la solution de la question et qui feront que l'annexion de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine sera prononcée sous peu par Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale Apostolique, mon Auguste Maître.

Comme il a été dit plus haut et comme il ressort du reste aussi de la note officielle qui Vous sera remise, nous renonçons au moment de l'annexion de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine à l'exercice des droits que le traité de Berlin nous a conférés par rapport au Sandjak.

En agissant ainsi et en retirant nos troupes du Sandjak nous donnons à la Turquie une preuve éclatante de notre confiante amitié, nous opposons un démenti énergique aux racontars qui nous prêtent des convoitises territoriales, et nous préparons le terrain pour pouvoir agir dans les affaires du Balkan en parfaite harmonie avec les autres Puissances; délivrés de l'incertitude de la situation en Bosnie-Herzégovine et au Sandjak il nous sera en effet plus facile que jusqu'à présent de procéder en Orient de concert avec les autres Cabinets.

Croyez, mon cher ami, à l'expression de mes sentiments sincèrement dévoués.

AEHRENTHAL.

No. 289.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 4, 1908.

F.O. 34264/31738/08/44A.

D. 11.30 A.M.

Tel. (No. 40.)

R. 12.45 P.M.

Your telegram No. 80.⁽¹⁾

I have spoken to Minister for Foreign Affairs in the sense of your telegram. His Excellency professed disbelief of rumours of imminent declaration of independence,

⁽¹⁾ [Circular. v. *supra*, p. 373, No. 278.]

and said that until he had received palpable evidence that such was now in contemplation he could hardly take action urged by His Majesty's Government.

The Austro-Hungarian Representative at Sophia was on the point of returning to his post, and he would be instructed to report upon the subject at once. Until that report was received his Excellency could do nothing. He added that he had only recently seriously warned Prince Ferdinand against any adventurous policy, and his advice had been well received.

His Excellency considered that subject should be treated with great caution, and that any unfriendly (?) warning on insufficient evidence might produce crisis in Bulgaria. His Excellency also said he was continuing to protest vigorously against action of Bulgarian Government respecting railway, and that he was unwilling to complicate matters by introducing such a delicate question into their discussions. Minister for Foreign Affairs was very pressed for time, and said that he would return to subject on Wednesday, by which time he would possibly have received report.

No. 290.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, October 4, 1908.

F.O. 34261/31738/08/44A.

D. 3:22 P.M.

Tel. (No. 51.)

R. 4:30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 90.⁽¹⁾

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informs me that stringent instructions have been sent to German Agent at Sophia to insist on restoration of railway to Company. He had not heard of Turkish agreement to transfer lease subsequently to Bulgarian Government, to which he did not think that German Government would raise any objection.

He appeared embarrassed when I alluded to reports in this morning's paper of impending annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which apparently had been announced yesterday by a letter from the Emperor of Austria to the President of the French Republic. He could tell me confidentially Austrian Ambassador was to return to Berlin to-morrow with an autograph letter from the Emperor of Austria to the German Emperor,⁽²⁾ and it seems as if question were to be treated directly by the Sovereigns, and not by their Ministers.

On my observing that I understood that Austro-Hungarian Government maintained that they could count on the support of the Cabinets of Berlin, Rome, and St. Petersburg, Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that he was convinced that any assurances given by the German Government could only have been of the vaguest possible nature.

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs appears to have been kept in ignorance of intentions of Austro-Hungarian Government, and it was only last evening that he stated to the French Ambassador that their action appeared to be "louche."

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [ED. NOTE.—This letter was dated September 29. It was delivered to Herr Stemrich on October 5 and forwarded to Rominten where the Kaiser received it on the 6th. Baron von Aehrenthal had written at the same time to Prince Bülow, who sent his comments with the letter of the Emperor of Austria to Rominten, *G.P.* XXVI, I, pp. 50-4, 97-8. There is a further telegram from Prince Bülow on pp. 110-2, apparently received on October 7, before the Kaiser received Herr von Szögyényi in audience and intimated that he would support the Austro-Hungarian annexation, *G.P.* XXVI, I, p. 113. His letter to the Emperor Francis Joseph is in *ib.* pp. 129-30. *cp.* Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, p. 191. Owing to a misprint, the date is given there as October 17 instead of October 7.]

No. 291.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 36140/31738/08/44A.

(No. 138.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. October 4, 1908.

R. October 19, 1908.

Immediately on receipt of your telegram No. 80 of October 2nd,⁽¹⁾ containing your proposal with regard to the contemplated declaration of Bulgarian Independence, I wrote a note to Baron d'Aehrenthal asking him to receive me. His Excellency replied that his time was so very much occupied that he feared that he would not be able to see me, all the more as he was leaving for Vienna that afternoon. As however His Excellency was staying at the same hotel, I managed to obtain a short interview with him before he left. I then communicated to His Excellency the substance of your telegram and told him that I had ventured to press myself upon him, as the matter was most urgent and admitted of no delay.

You will have seen from my telegram⁽²⁾ that his reply to my representations was, to say the least of it, evasive to a degree. In fact his profession of disbelief in the imminence of a declaration of independence on the part of the Bulgarian Government, when regarded in the light of Sir George Buchanan's latest telegrams, can hardly be received without some scepticism. I felt very strongly during our conversation that his statements were somewhat intended to mislead; and when, therefore, he told me that he had seriously warned Prince Ferdinand at Budapest not to engage in an adventurous policy, I asked him straight out whether his warning was a reply to any statement on the part of the Prince and whether he had given His Royal Highness to understand that the Austro-Hungarian Government deprecated a declaration of independence on the part of Bulgaria? His Excellency, however, did not take up the challenge, and contented himself with saying that he had told me what he had said to the Prince and that His Royal Highness had taken his observations in good part.

His Excellency gave as one of the grounds of his disbelief in the imminence of the declaration of independence the fact that Prince Ferdinand was still in Hungary and that it was not likely that his Ministers would move without him. I told His Excellency that the Prince had once said to me that whenever He was absent from Bulgaria His Government was sure to commit some act of stupidity, and I asked whether, in view of the warnings he had addressed to the Prince, the above observation to me might not still hold good. For, I observed, His Majesty's Government would not have urged the course suggested in the telegram, which I had had the honour to communicate to him, so earnestly, unless they had very good grounds for fearing that the persistent rumours as to the imminence of a declaration of independence on the part of either the Prince or His Government, or both, rested on a solid foundation. His Excellency however replied that these rumours had not been confirmed by the Austro-Hungarian Representative at Sofia, and that I could readily understand that he could not give any assurance as to what course he would pursue until he was sure of his ground. Any premature remonstrance would be useless, and might moreover, provoke a crisis in Bulgaria which would be very serious at the present juncture. He added that the Austro-Hungarian Representative at Sofia, who had just spent a few days at Budapest, was on the point of returning to his post, and he would be instructed to send in a full report at once. This report might be in his hands on Wednesday, the last day on which he could receive the Diplomatic Corps before the opening of the Delegations, and he would then discuss the matter with me again. I told His Excellency that I greatly regretted that the discussion of a matter which appeared to His Majesty's Government so urgent should be deferred for so many days, particularly as, according to my information, there seemed every chance of events moving rapidly; but he made no reply and changed

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 373, No. 278.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 379-80, No. 289.]

the conversation to the subject of the action of the Bulgarian Government with regard to the Orient Railway.

As regards this question, His Excellency was more eloquent, and laid great stress upon the activity he was displaying to bring the Bulgarian Government to a sense of their wrongful proceedings. He said that as the country which held a very large proportion of shares in the Railway Austria-Hungary was deeply interested in the settlement of the question. He had therefore protested vigorously against the action of the Bulgarian Government and was continuing to uphold that protest as strongly as possible. I asked His Excellency whether his vigorous protests had had any effect, and he replied that, though as yet the Bulgarian Government had shown itself somewhat recalcitrant he had every hope that the matter would soon be satisfactorily settled. It was at this point of our conversation that he gave me to understand that he did not wish to hamper the negotiations now in progress by the introduction of such a delicate matter as a warning respecting the declaration of independence.

His Excellency then turned to the question of the Constitutional movement in Turkey. He told me that reports which he had received from Salonica and Constantinople showed that the state of affairs with regard to the movement was anything but satisfactory. The young lieutenants who had practically started the movement were getting out of hand and Hilmi Pasha, who had hitherto succeeded in smoothing over difficulties and keeping matters straight, was beginning to lose his influence.

These reports caused him much anxiety as it was clear that any mistakes on the part of the young Turk party resulting from over-confidence and an exaggerated exercise of power would immediately be taken advantage of by the partisans of reaction. His Excellency then earnestly begged me to assure you that the constitutional movement had his full support and that he sincerely desired its success. He desired it both for the sake of Turkey and in the interests of Austria-Hungary. He did not wish for any monopolies or any special advantages, economic or otherwise, but he did wish that Austria-Hungary should have a fair field and be able, in legitimate competition with other countries, to extract what profit she could from her favourable geographical position. A stable Constitutional Government in Turkey, such as would render unnecessary continual intervention from outside, would be the best possible instrument for the establishment of such a desirable state of affairs, therefore you would readily understand that it had his hearty sympathy and support.

In view of the severe blow which the declaration of Independence of Bulgaria and the impending annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina will in all probability strike at the growing prestige of the Young Turk party, it is not difficult to understand Baron d'Aehrenthal's eager desire that I should convey the above message to you without delay.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 292.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34397/31738/08/44A.

(No. 378.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. October 4, 1908.

R. October 5, 1908.

Monsieur Isvolsky who arrived at Paris this morning asked to see me and called by appointment this evening. He told me that he had not yet been received by the Minister for Foreign Affairs as he was absent from Paris shooting. He had however seen the Political Director at the Quai d'Orsay and had given to him the explanations

⁽¹⁾ [This was also telegraphed more briefly in Tel. No. 56 of 5th October, D. 12.25 A.M., R. 2.30 A.M.]

as to what had passed between himself and Baron d'Aehrenthal in regard to the possible annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and his subsequent conversations on the subject with Monsieur de Schoen and Monsieur Tittoni.

Monsieur Isvolsky said that he desired to give me the same explanations for your information which he did at considerable length. He then suggested that I should draft for his perusal a telegram reporting them to you. I said that it would be perhaps more satisfactory if he would put in the form of a Memorandum the explanations which he wished you to have, and he then wrote the paper which I have the honour to transmit to you herewith. As Monsieur Isvolsky is anxious that it should not be regarded as a written communication I will send by the Messenger to-morrow a Despatch giving as a conversation with me the statements made in his Memorandum.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

Enclosure in No. 292.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolski to Sir F. Bertie.(²)

F.O. 34397/31738/08/44A.

Au cours de mon entrevue avec le Baron d'Aehrenthal (15 Sept[embre]) celui-ci me dit que certaines circonstances pourraient déterminer l'Autriche à annexer la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine, sans pourtant me parler d'une décision définitive ni d'une date rapprochée. Il essaya de soutenir la thèse que l'annexion ne présentait qu'une question entre l'Autriche et la Turquie, et que l'Autriche avait sur les deux provinces un droit de conquête. Je lui déclarai nettement que la Russie ne pouvait pas accepter cette thèse, que nous considérerions l'annexion comme une question intéressant les Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin et comme une atteinte portée à ce traité. J'ajoutai qu'en se décidant à l'annexion, l'Autriche risquait de mettre la poudre à l'Orient et créerait parmi les Etats Balcaniques et en Turquie une effervescence dangereuse pour la paix. Il s'empessa de me répondre que l'Autriche donnerait en même temps à la Turquie et aux Puissances Balcaniques une compensation de nature à les calmer: —celle du retrait de ses troupes du Sanjak de Novi Bazar et d'une renonciation formelle aux droits qui lui étaient conférés sur cette province par le Traité de Berlin. Je lui dis que ceci rendrait évidemment plus facile une issue pacifique mais que cette compensation ne me paraissait suffisante ni pour la Russie ni pour les Etats Balcaniques. Nous ne vous ferons pas la guerre, lui dis-je, mais je vous préviens que si vous abolissez une clause du Traité de Berlin, onéreuse pour vous, vous devez vous attendre à ce que la Russie et les Etats Balcaniques demandent l'abolition d'autres clauses, onéreuses pour elles. Bref vous provoquerez une révision du Traité de Berlin. Pour ce qui est de la Russie elle n'a aucun appetit territorial en Turquie et elle ne demande que la conservation du *statu quo* actuel et de l'intégrité de l'Empire Ottoman. Mais en cas de revision nous demanderons la modification dans un sens favorable à la Russie et aux autres Puissances riveraines de la Mer Noire des stipulations concernant les détroits. Les Etats Balcaniques voudront aussi être compensés; la Bulgarie demandera l'indépendance; la Serbie une rectification de frontière du côté de la Bosnie; le Monténégro, l'abolition des restrictions qui lui sont imposées par l'Art[icle] 29 et je vous préviens que nous les soutiendrons. Tout ceci je l'exprimai comme une opinion personnelle que je m'empresserai de soumettre à l'Empereur. Depuis lors nous n'avons fait aucune communication au Cabinet de Vienne, et l'assertion du Comte Khevenhueller que l'Autriche Hongrie agit avec le consentement de la Russie est pour le moins exagérée. Lorsqu'il y a une semaine j'ai vu Schoen, il me dit que le Baron d'Aehrenthal l'avait prévenu

(²) [This is the Buchlau interview, v. pp. 366-8, Nos. 269-70, and p. 411, *note*. This text is printed in Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 630-1, *note*, where it is added "The source of this information has not been indicated in the material collected by Sir Sidney Lee."]

de l'annexion comme d'une éventualité lointaine et manifesta une certaine inquiétude au sujet des projets Autrichiens. Je n'ai pas manqué de le mettre au courant de ce qui précède. Tittoni que j'ai vu Mardi dernier, n'en savait rien, et s'est montré très ému de cette perspective. Après y avoir pensé il m'a dit que l'Italie ne soulèverait pas à cette occasion la question de Tripoli, et se contenterait, comme compensation morale, de l'évacuation du Sanjak de Novi Bazar (à quoi il attache beaucoup d'importance) et de l'abolition de l'Art[icle] 29 limitant les droits du Monténégro.

Pour ce qui est de la Bulgarie, nous avons fait savoir à Sofia de la manière la plus catégorique que nous désapprouverions la proclamation par elle de son indépendance [*sic*], et que si elle y procédait sans notre assentiment elle le ferait à ses risques et périls et que nous ne lui porterions aucun secours moral ou matériel. Nous avons ajouté le conseil de patienter, et si l'Autriche Hongrie se décidait à annexer la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine ceci donnerait probablement lieu à une révision du Traité de Berlin au cours de laquelle nous pourrions soutenir sa prétension.

No. 293.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34530/31738/08/44A.

(No. 380.)

Sir,

Paris, D. October 4, 1908.

R. October 6, 1908.

I received a message to-day from Monsieur Isvolsky that he wished to see me. He came this evening between 5 and 6 o'clock.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency said that he had arrived at Paris this morning, but that the Minister for Foreign Affairs being absent for the day he had not yet been received by him. He had however seen the Political Director and had given to him for the information of the French Government explanations as to what had passed between Baron d'Aehrenthal and himself and between himself and the German and Italian Ministers for Foreign Affairs in regard to a possible annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He would give me the same explanations which he begged that I would telegraph to you for the information of His Majesty's Government.

Monsieur Isvolsky then gave me those explanations at considerable length. He stated that in the course of an interview which he had with Baron d'Aehrenthal on the 15th of September that Minister had said that certain circumstances might cause Austria to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina. He did not however state that such a decision was definitive nor did he say that it would be acted on at an early date. His Excellency had endeavoured to argue that Austria had rights of conquest over those provinces by having restored order in them and that the question of annexation would be one for arrangement between Austria and Turkey only. Monsieur Isvolsky had told the Baron very decidedly that Russia could not accept such a theory; that she would consider an annexation as a question interesting the Powers signatory of the Treaty of Berlin and as a breach of that Treaty. He had added that if Austria decided to annex the Provinces she would incur the risk of setting the East in a blaze and would create a ferment in the Balkan States and in Turkey dangerous to the maintenance of peace. Baron d'Aehrenthal had at once replied that Austria would provide compensation of such a nature as to appease Turkey and the Balkan States viz. the withdrawal of her troops from the Sanjak of Novi Bazar, and a formal renunciation of the rights conferred on her over that province by the Treaty of Berlin. Monsieur Isvolsky had observed that this would

(1) [A telegram No. 56 of October 5, received the same day, also says "this evening," but the telegram was obviously written on the evening of the 4th, being despatched just after midnight (12.25 A.M.). The visit therefore took place on the 4th as stated above.]

evidently make a pacific issue more easy, but that the compensation in question did not appear to him sufficient either for Russia or for the Balkan States. Russia would not go to war on the point, but he must warn Baron d'Aehrenthal that if Austria abolished an Article of the Treaty of Berlin onerous to her, she must expect Russia and the Balkan States to demand the abolition of other Articles onerous to them. In short that she would bring about a revision of the Treaty of Berlin. As far as Russia was concerned she had no territorial ambitions in Turkey and she only desired the maintenance of the *status quo* and the integrity of the Ottoman Empire; but in the event of a revision she would require a modification, in a sense favourable to herself and the other riverain States of the Black Sea, of the stipulations concerning the Straits. The Balkan States would also wish to be compensated: Bulgaria would demand independence, Servia a rectification of frontier towards Bosnia; Montenegro the abolition of the restrictions imposed on her by Article 29 of the Berlin Treaty viz. in regard to the Antivari territory, fortifications, Ships of War, etc., and he had warned Baron d'Aehrenthal that Russia would support those States. Turkey likewise might not consider that the retrocession of Novi Bazar as compensating her for the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and might be expected to raise the questions of the Capitulations and the rights of the Powers in regard to Customs Duties. He had also suggested the possibility of Turkey making armed opposition to the annexation, whereupon Baron d'Aehrenthal had said that the Austro-Hungarian Government knew that there was such utter disorganisation in the Turkish Administration and Army that resistance would be out of the question. He had explained to the Baron that the views which he had expressed were personal but that he would at once submit the matter to the Emperor of Russia.

Since this interview with the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs the Russian Government had, M. Isvolsky assured me, not made any communication to the Cabinet of Vienna. The assertion of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to the French Minister for Foreign Affairs, of which he had been informed by the Political Director, viz. that Austria-Hungary was acting with the consent of Russia, was therefore at least an exaggeration.

With regard to the conversation which M. Isvolsky had with M. de Schoen and M. Tittoni on the subject of the communication made to him by Baron d'Aehrenthal. His Excellency informed me that he had learned from the German Foreign Secretary that the Baron had spoken to him of annexation as a far off eventuality. M. de Schoen however manifested some anxiety on the subject of Austrian projects, and M. Isvolsky had made him acquainted with what had passed between himself and the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs. On the 29th of September he saw M. Tittoni who knew nothing of Austrian projects and was much perturbed, ("très ému") on their being made known to him by M. Isvolsky. The Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs after some reflection stated that Italy would not on the present occasion raise the question of Tripoli, she would content herself, as moral compensation, with the evacuation of the Sanjak of Novibazar to which she attached great importance and the abolition of the article of the Treaty of Berlin, restricting the rights of Montenegro, for Austria's prospect of direct access to Salonika would thereby be prevented.

As to Bulgaria, on my inquiring whether the question of her declaring her independence had been mentioned by Baron d'Aehrenthal, for the French Government expected from Count Khevenhüller's language that it would be declared to-morrow, M. Isvolsky said that the question had not been discussed between him and the Austrian Foreign Secretary. The Russian Government had informed the Government at Sofia in the most categorical manner that Russia would disapprove a proclamation of the independence of Bulgaria, and that if she so acted without the assent of the Russian Government she would do so at her risk and peril and Russia would not give her either moral or material support. The Russian Government had further counselled patience and had expressed the opinion that in the event of Austria Hungary deciding to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina it would

probably lead to a revision of the Treaty of Berlin in the course of which Russia could support the Bulgarian claim.

From my interview with M. Izvolsky I have the impression, I may say the conviction, that he did not quite tell me the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. I cannot believe that Austria would venture to proceed to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina without any consultation whatever with France and England unless she had already obtained the consent of Germany, the concurrence of Russia and the acquiescence of Italy. Otherwise she might find herself actively opposed by Turkey with the moral if not the material support of France and England; and Russia and Italy without promise of compensating advantages for the breach of treaty committed by Austria to what they considered their detriment. The probability is that Monsieur Izvolsky obtained promises from Baron d'Aehrenthal and M. Tittoni on the subject of the Straits and that he intended on his visit to Paris and London to prepare the ground for the acquiescence of France and England in Russia's desires in that question. He did not imagine that the Austro-Hungarian Government would proceed to carry out their projects without further consultation with the Russian Government. In this he was mistaken and deceived. When I asked him whether he could account for the determination of Austria to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina he said that it was very much a matter of internal policy. Austria had during the present Emperor's reign been a loser of territory. His Majesty's Jubilee was probably considered by Baron d'Aehrenthal an auspicious occasion for adding something to his States. There were questions between Austria and Hungary which the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina would assist to settle. On my observing that I understood that under the project of Austria as announced to the French Government they would be constituted as an autonomous province with representative institutions until it had been determined to which Crown they should appertain, that of Austria or that of Hungary, Monsieur Izvolsky said that they would be incorporated, he was informed, in the Austrian Empire, the Kingdom of Hungary being probably compensated for this arrangement by concessions in regard to Croatia. I think that it is evident from this remark and others which I have reported in this despatch that the question of annexation was pretty fully discussed and decided between Baron d'Aehrenthal and Monsieur Izvolsky, and that it was not a project for further discussion and consideration between Austria and Russia. What was not decided was the moment at which it should be carried into effect, and the announcement made to the French Government by the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador was no doubt a great and disagreeable surprise to Monsieur Izvolsky.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

No. 294.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34531/31738/08/44A.

(No. 380A.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. October 4, 1908.

R. October 6, 1908.

M. Pichon being absent from Paris to-day I asked for an interview with M. Clemenceau in order that I might if possible ascertain the views of the French Government on the communication made to the Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday by the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador. His Excellency received me this evening after my interview with M. Izvolsky and I acquainted him with the explanations given to me by the Russian Minister in regard to his interviews with Baron d'Aehrenthal, M. de Schoen and M. Tittoni.

M. Clemenceau told me that he had good reason to know that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador was very anxious as to what would be the attitude of France and England on the question of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He also said that when Count Khevenhüller communicated to the President of the Republic the letter from The Emperor of Austria M. Fallières had observed to him that the annexation by Austria would no doubt be followed by a declaration of independence by Bulgaria, to which the Ambassador had made answer that it would be preceded by such declaration which would be made on Monday, the annexation by Austria following it the next day.

M. Clemenceau in the course of our conversation expressed the opinion that Turkey would not actively oppose the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina for she had ceased weeping over the loss of those Provinces (*elle en a fait son deuil*) but that with regard to a declaration of independence by Bulgaria it did not seem at all probable that the Porte would accept it without opposition.

M. Clemenceau had not seen M. Isvolsky but the explanations which he had given to the Political Director at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs were similar to those of which I had informed him. He did not think that France and England should accept without serious protest the proceedings of Austria. It was a gross breach of a treaty engagement and an offence to public morality which if allowed to pass would form a very bad precedent. There could of course be no question of France and England doing or saying anything that would commit them to the use of force, but they ought, he considered, to be very stiff in their language and refuse to give their recognition to the act of Austria, and he was inclined to think that it might be found desirable to have a Conference of the Treaty Powers on the subject.

I said that I did not know what might be your view on such a suggestion, but that Conferences without a preliminary understanding between a majority of the Parties were apt to end in discord and I asked him what would be the position of France and England in such a Conference if, as had been asserted by Austria, she had the concurrence of Germany, Russia and Italy in the annexation which she was about to declare. France and England would be in disagreement with Russia the ally of France. M. Clemenceau said that he had not seen M. Pichon since M. Isvolsky's visit to the Political Director at the Quai d'Orsay and he would like to have the views of His Majesty's Government and further consider the matter.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

No. 295.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Sophia, October 5, 1908.

F.O. 34520/31738/08/44A.

D. 4.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 38.)

R. 6.50 P.M.

As Prince Ferdinand will probably arrive here this evening or to-morrow morning from Tirnovo I should be grateful for immediate instructions as to my attitude towards His Royal Highness and Government. I would suggest that precedent obtaining before his recognition in 1896 might be followed, when Agents had personal relations with the Prince. In this case am I authorized to write name down at Palace, as is usual when Prince and Princess return from abroad, and to obey commands if he wishes to receive me in audience?

I think it would be well that I should communicate my instructions, when received, to his Private Secretary, and explain that, for the present, I can only have relations with him as Prince of Bulgaria.

My French colleague is telegraphing in the above sense to his Government.

No. 296.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34595/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 5, 1908.

Tel. (No. 284.)⁽²⁾

D. 5.10 P.M.

I have told Turkish Ambassador that we shall reply both as regards Bulgarian Independence and Austrian Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina that we cannot admit the rights of any Power to alter an international Treaty without the consent of the other parties to it: that we shall therefore refuse to recognize what has been done till the views of the other Powers are known especially of Turkey, who is more concerned than any one else. I told him I thought Turkey had been hardly treated, that all our sympathies were with the new regime, which we believed was with entirely pure and peaceful motives devoting itself to internal reform. In reply to a request for advice as to whether Turkey should go to war I replied that I did not see how war could help the new regime; what Turkey most needed now was time and money. War would deprive her of both. The independence of Bulgaria and annexation of Bosnia were no material loss to Turkey, though injurious from the point of view of sentiment and prestige; if Turkey protested and eventually asked for compensation we should support any proposals which seemed fair consideration for her. The Ambassador asked what sort of compensation Turkey could ask. I said I could not say whether a money indemnity would be acceptable or practicable, I would only suggest that Turkey should look at the situation from this point of view for I felt she had not been well treated and though we should not propose a Conference, it might very likely be the outcome of the present complications and we should like to see fair consideration given to her interests.

(1) [Paraphrase quoted in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 176-7.]

(2) [Endorsed as repeated to Sir F. Bertie in telegram No. 152 of October 5. The repetition apparently did not quote the number here given (No. 284), *v. infra*, p. 395, No. 311.]

No. 297.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, October 5, 1908.

F.O. 34527/31738/08/44A.

D. 6.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 57.)

R. 8.30 P.M.

Near East.

M. Isvolsky has suggested to French Minister for Foreign Affairs that a Conference of Berlin Treaty Powers would be best way of dealing with action of Austria-Hungary. The French Government are disposed to concur, and wish to have your views. A despatch on the subject goes to you this evening.⁽¹⁾

(1) [*v. infra*, pp. 391-2, No. 304.]

No. 298.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Therapia, October 5, 1908.

F.O. 34515/31738/08/44.

D. 6.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 295.)

R. 9.11 P.M.

Bulgaria.

No news has yet reached here regarding proclamation at Tirnovo.

Press this morning was quite calm on the advice of Grand Vizier. Mr. Fitzmaurice⁽¹⁾ was with him a great part of the night, and on the whole his

(1) [The chief Dragoman to the British Embassy.]

Highness appeared to think there was nothing to be done but to refer the matter to the Powers.

I have seen him to-day. German Ambassador had denied all knowledge of proclamation or of proposed annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Grand Vizier seemed still to have hope that the former might not have been actually carried out. He does not seem to be quite able to bring himself to believe that Bulgaria will have support of all Powers with the exception of France and England.

The fact that we are in Ramazan may make it difficult to restrain the people owing to religious excitement.

No. 299.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

October 5, 1908.

D. 7.5 P.M.

Tel. Private.⁽¹⁾

It is quite incredible that Baron d'Aehrenthal had not arranged with Bulgaria before speaking to you as he did in his [*sic*] No. 40.⁽²⁾ You and we cannot but feel justly aggrieved at being treated with such bad faith. The information also which has reached us is to the effect that the statement that Austria had received the consent of other Powers to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina went beyond the truth. I do not wish to make such things the subject of any official remonstrance, but think it well that you should know my feeling and I have no objection to any unofficial expression which your own feeling may inspire.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 1.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 379-80, No. 289.]

No. 300.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 5, 1908.

D. 7.10 P.M.

R. 7.45 P.M.

F.O. 34517/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 43.)

My telegram No. 42.⁽¹⁾

When Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs mentioned that Minister for Foreign Affairs would give me an answer respecting your Oriental Railway proposal on Wednesday, I mentioned the fact that his Excellency had promised to give me an answer on that day to an urgent proposal of His Majesty's Government with regard to Bulgarian declaration of independence, and that he had informed me at the same time that he had no belief in its imminence. It was only two days ago that His Excellency had made that statement, and now I understood that declaration had been made. Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said that as a matter of fact declaration had just (been) made at Tirnovo, but that Minister for Foreign Affairs had been right in saying that there had been nothing in their reports from Sophia to show that it was so imminent.

⁽¹⁾ [This dealt with the Orient Railway.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The independence of Bulgaria was proclaimed at Tirnovo the ancient capital at 11 A.M. on the 5th October, 1908.]

No. 301.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34597/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 5, 1908.

Tel. (No. 432.)

D. 8:30 P.M.

If as I expect Turkey contents herself with a protest against Bulgarian and Austrian action but asks for some compensation for her interests I hope we may find ourselves in agreement with Russia in adopting an attitude friendly to Turkey in the consultations of the Powers. Feeling here is that the new regime in Turkey has been badly treated and deserves consideration. It is too soon to make any proposal to Russian Gov[ernmen]t and situation is very delicate and complicated, but this is the line I wish to follow.

(1) [Paraphrase quoted in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, p. 176.]

No. 302.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 34596/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 5, 1908.

Tel. (No. 96.)

D. 8:30 P.M.

I have seen B[aro]n Aehrenthal's letter to Sir C. Hardinge of Sept[ember] 28.

You should remind H[is] E[xc]cellency of the protocol of Jan[uary] 17, 1871, attached to the Treaty of London, to which Austria-Hungary is a party, in which it was laid down that no Power can break its treaty engagements or modify their stipulations except by friendly agreement and with the assent of the Contracting Parties. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t could not approve of an open violation of the Treaty of Berlin nor recognise an alteration of it when the other Powers and in this case especially Turkey have not been consulted. You should make repres[entatio]ns in this sense to the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t and urge strongly upon them the necessity of reconsidering their decision to annex the two occupied provinces.

(1) [Paraphrase quoted in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 175-6.]

No. 303.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, October 5, 1908.

F.O. 34519/31738/08/44A.

D. 8:35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 184.) Confidential.

R. 11 P.M.

I saw Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon, and inquired of him whether it was true the Russian Government had expressed their concurrence with the step which Austria-Hungary was about to take in respect of annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

His Excellency told me that the statement was somewhat exaggerated; that a confidential and preliminary exchange of views had taken place, but that Russian Government had not yet given a formal reply. He added that the Russian Government did not consider that eventual annexation of the two provinces by Austria-Hungary constituted a *casus belli*, and they did not intend to oppose it; but that the Russian Government were preparing a Circular despatch to the Powers, proposing that they should meet in conference for the revision of the Berlin Treaty, with a view to changing those Articles of that Act which were onerous to other parties, to Turkey, to Russia, and to Balkan States.

I took down in his presence above statement, and read it over to him so that there should be no mistake.

I told him that I had been much surprised to hear Russia had given her consent, as I had been under the impression that we were working hand in hand in regard to Balkan affairs, and that I did not understand how Russia could consent to an act which would rouse public feeling to great heat and was so full of unknown consequences. He repeated that Russia had not given her consent; she had merely let Austria-Hungary know her views, and that Russia did not admit one Power could free herself from any Treaty provision without consultation with all other Signatory Powers. At the same time Russia did not intend to oppose Austria's intention, as Russian interests were not directly affected. I asked whether the Russian Government had informed the Austrian Government of all that I had taken down, and he replied in the affirmative.

(Most Confidential.)

I had some difficulty at first in extracting a definite reply from him, but my firm impression is that his chief in his interviews went further than then was known here, and very naturally he was anxious to cover his chief as far as possible.

Austrian Ambassador returned here to-day with a letter from the Emperor of Austria to the Emperor. As His Majesty is attending some naval manœuvres he cannot receive Ambassador personally, and this letter is to be forwarded by a special boat this evening.

I should mention that Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs expressed hope that at Conference Great Britain would work with Russia, especially in the interests of Young Turkey, as he found the preconcerted action of Austria and Bulgaria was largely directed against the new situation in Turkey.

MINUTES.

There seems to be little doubt that Russia assented to the action of Austria and Bulgaria.

J. A. C. T.

We need not yet give a reply to the Russian proposal for a Conference since we can wait to receive the promised circular. I think however we should only accept the proposal for a Conference on the distinct understanding that it is not to be utilised to exert pressure on Turkey for her further spoliation. It may be as well, if this view is approved, to explain this condition to both the Russian and French Gov[ernmen]ts. We could of course agree to the consideration of any question to which the Turkish Gov[ernment] had given their assent.

C. H.

It would be necessary before going into any conference that there should be a preliminary agreement as to what subjects should be discussed how they should be dealt with and in what form Turkey can receive any advantage to compensate her for advantages gained by other Powers at her expense.

E. G.

No. 304.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34532/31738/08/44A.

(No. 381.) Confidential.

Sir,

Paris, D. October 5, 1908.

R. October 6, 1908.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me to call on him this afternoon. I found that M. Izvolsky had to-day given to him in substance but apparently not in such detail the explanations which he had communicated to me yesterday in regard to his recent interviews with the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, the German Foreign Secretary and the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Monsieur Pichon informed me that Monsieur Izvolsky's idea of the best way of dealing with the questions raised by the action of Austria-Hungary would be a

Conference of the Powers parties to the Treaty of Berlin and the French Government are disposed to concur in that view for the Russian Government are ready to discuss the matter with the French British and Italian Governments so as if possible to come to an understanding as to the attitude to be observed by the four Powers and Turkey in such a Conference. Austria Hungary would be the party accused of a breach of treaty engagement and probably her only supporter would be Germany as the brilliant second, thus reversing the parts played by those two Powers at Algeciras.

Monsieur Pichon does not believe Germany to have been an accessory to the Austrian project either before or after a decision was arrived at to carry out the annexation. He also believes that M. Tittoni was in ignorance of the intentions of Austria and that she will be ready to act with France Russia and England.

Monsieur Pichon is anxious to have your views on Monsieur Izvolsky's suggestion.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

No. 305.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 36141/31738/08/44.

(No. 141.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. October 5, 1908.

R. October 19, 1908.

. . . .⁽¹⁾ I took the opportunity of a short conversation with Baron Call on the general situation to express my surprise that Baron d'Aehrenthal should have expressed disbelief in the imminence of the declaration of Bulgarian independence only two days, if the news in the papers was correct, before the declaration was made. Baron Call replied that as a matter of fact the official news of the Declaration had just reached him, but he could assure me that neither Baron d'Aehrenthal nor he had the slightest idea that that important event had been so near at hand. . . .⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

⁽¹⁾ [The first part of this despatch refers to the Orient Railway question, and the last part gives Baron von Call's further views on the effect of Bulgarian Independence.]

No. 306.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 34775/31738/08/44.

(No. 477.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1908.

As M. Cambon was confined to the house by a chill, M. Fleuriau came to see me to-day and informed me of the views which M. Iswolsky had expressed respecting the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

What M. Fleuriau told me agreed with what had already been communicated to me about M. Iswolsky's views, with the addition that M. Iswolsky had spoken of compensation not only to Russia and the Balkan States in return for what Austria would gain, but also to Turkey; and had suggested that this compensation might be found not only in the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, but in some future modification of the Capitulations.

As to Bulgaria, it appeared that when it had been remarked to the Austrian Ambassador in Paris that if Austria annexed Bosnia Bulgaria would follow by proclaiming her independence, the Ambassador had said that on the contrary the Bulgarian declaration would come first.

M. Cambon's own personal opinion was that such a disturbance of the Treaty of Berlin could not pass without some observations; and he referred, for example,

to the Protocol proposed by Lord Granville and signed among other Powers by Austria at the Conference in London in 1871, laying down the principle that it was an essential principle of the Law of Nations that no Power could free itself from the engagements of a Treaty, nor modify its stipulations, except by the assent of the contracting parties.

I told M. Fleuriat that I intended to inform the Turkish Ambassador that we should withhold recognition of both Bulgarian independence and Bosnian annexation until we knew the views of the other Powers, and especially of Turkey, whose interests were most concerned.

It was true that Turkey lost nothing materially: but from the point of view of sentiment and prestige what had happened was most unfortunate. It would be injurious to the new régime in Turkey, and might turn it from a peaceful movement into a military one.

I was most anxious to know the views of the French Government, and I hoped they would agree in taking a line at Constantinople which was friendly to Turkey.

As to the Capitulations, one difficulty was that every Power would demand some compensation for agreeing to modify them, and it was not easy to see what compensation to France, Germany, and England could be given.

M. Fleuriat remarked that the Treaty of Berlin had been settled by the six Great Powers, but if the Capitulations were to be called into question all the minor Powers would naturally put in a claim to be considered also.

Subsequently, I saw M. Cambon at the French Embassy, but our conversation was to the same effect.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 307.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Egerton.

F.O. 34773/31738/08/44.

(No. 132.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1908.

The Italian Ambassador came to inform me to-day that, from telegrams he had received from M. Tittoni, it was clear to him that the statement in the Press that M. Tittoni's assent had been given in advance to the Austrian annexation of Bosnia was unfounded.

M. Tittoni knew that the Austrians were addressing to the Powers a Note which would affirm their intention of annexing Bosnia. He also knew that M. Iswolsky considered the recognition of annexation would require the consent of all the Powers, and intended to propose a Congress immediately.

The Ambassador asked me if I was aware of M. Iswolsky's views.

I said I knew he had told Baron d'Aehrenthal that if Bosnia was annexed it would lead to further demands on behalf of other countries, and would require the consent of all the Powers. But I had not heard that he intended to propose a Conference.

The Ambassador asked what reply we intended to give to Austria.

I told him my reply would be that we cannot admit the right of any one Power to alter an international Treaty without the consent of the other Powers who are parties to it, and that in this case we must withhold our consent till the views of the other Powers are known, more especially the views of Turkey, which is the Power most affected.

The Italian Ambassador informed me that instructions had been sent to the Italian Representative at Sofia to associate himself with our warning to the Bulgarian Government against a declaration of independence.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 308.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 34774/31738/08/44.

(No. 47.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1908.

The Servian Minister to-day told me he was instructed to say that the Servian Government and the Servian Nation were extremely alarmed by the news and the symptoms as to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The annexation would be considered in Servia and in all countries inhabited by Serbs as a great national catastrophe, and its consequences might become fatal to the peace of the Balkan Peninsula.

Since he had received this instruction, it appeared that the annexation was practically a *fait accompli*.

He dwelt with great emphasis on the feeling it would arouse in Servia, where it would be regarded as an advance on the part of Austria. For Austria had originally occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina on the ground that she could not endure a state of disorder in places bordering on her frontier. Now, if these two countries became parts of her dominions, other places bordering on her new frontier would in turn become the subject of her interference. In 1878 there had been a regular rising in Bosnia and Herzegovina against Austrian rule; there might be another rising now; and if this happened the situation would be very difficult for the Servian people.

I told the Servian Minister that all I could do was to take note of their point of view. I thought the disturbance of the *status quo* was ill-timed, precisely because it would raise the question of the Treaty of Berlin, and because what Bulgaria had done and what Austria was doing would excite feeling or raise questions in other quarters, notably, of course, in Turkey itself.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 309.

Communication from the Servian Chargé d'Affaires, October 5, 1908.

F.O. 34665/31738/08/44.

Légation Royale de Serbie.

Le Gouvernement Serbe et la Nation Serbe sont extrêmement alarmés par les nouvelles et les symptômes concernant l'annexion de la Bosnie et de l'Herzegovine.

L'annexion serait considérée en Serbie, et dans toutes les contrées habitées par des Serbes, comme une catastrophe nationale générale et ses conséquences pourraient devenir fatales pour la paix dans la Péninsule Balcanique.

Le 5 Octobre, 1908.

No. 310.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 34520/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 6, 1908.

Tel. (No. 52.)

D. 1.20 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 38.⁽¹⁾

I concur in attitude which you propose to adopt.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 387, No. 295.]

No. 311.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, October 6, 1908.

F.O. 34662/31738/08/44A.

D. 1.23 P.M.

Tel. (No. 58.) Pressing.

R. 3.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 154 of last night.⁽¹⁾

I have seen Monsieur Clemenceau and M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] together this morning. They were already in possession, through the French Embassy in London, of what you said to the Turkish Ambassador as recorded in your telegram to Constantinople (unnumbered) repeated to me by your telegram No. 152 of yesterday evening. I informed them of the Communication which by your telegram No. 96 of last night⁽²⁾ you instructed H[is] M[ajesty's] R[epresentative] at Vienna to make to the Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] in which reference is made to London Protocol of Jan[uary] 17, 1871.

Monsieur Clemenceau and M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] have learnt on Thursday that the Russian Gov[ernment] intend to propose a Conference of Berlin Treaty Powers. They think that it would be much preferable that such proposal should be made by Russia, France and England acting together. They consider it would have a great and good moral effect in Europe. They attach the greatest possible importance to your accepting this suggestion. They think that it would be a mistake to ask Turkey to join in proposing a Conference as she is the aggrieved and interested Party. They also think that in the Conference Italy can be brought to act with the three proposing Powers.

Please reply as soon as possible as Monsieur Clemenceau is obliged to leave Paris and I am to see him with M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] at 10 o'clock to-morrow morning.

⁽¹⁾ [The text of this telegram was as follows: "You should inform French Minister for Foreign Affairs of purport of my telegram No. 284 to Sir G. Lowther." This telegram No. 284 is the one referred to above in the second paragraph as "unnumbered." *cp.* p. 388, No. 296, note 2.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 390, No. 302.]

No. 312.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 34519/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 6, 1908.

Tel. (No. 436.)

D. 3 P.M.

I entirely reciprocate the hope expressed by Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] in last paragraph of your No. 184⁽¹⁾ and you may assure him that this is exactly what we wish to do, but it will need a careful consideration of the best way

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 390-1, No. 303.]

to help the Young Turk movement. Its greatest need is money and if some substantial consideration could be secured for Turkey in this form as her compensation for advantages gained by others in a revision of the Treaty of Berlin it might save the situation, though I have as yet no information as to the views of Turkish or other Gov[ernmen]ts on this point. If they are favourable a loan to Turkey guaranteed by the Powers might be part of this solution. It has also to be remembered that no tribute has ever been paid by Bulgaria as contemplated by the Berlin Treaty and it would not be unreasonable that Bulgaria in receiving her independence should make some pecuniary payments on this head.

No. 313.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Therapia, October 6, 1908.

F.O. 34666/31738/08/44A.

D. 5.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 296.)

R. 11 P.M.

Sir G. Buchanan's telegram No. 36.⁽¹⁾

I cannot agree that immediate recognition by us of independence of Bulgaria would offer any likelihood of pacific solution as far as Turkey is concerned. Deserted by all the Powers, she is more likely to act in a spirit of desperation. Best chance is to encourage Turkey with the idea that she still has the moral support of at least Great Britain and France, and that matter of Bulgaria will be settled, not altogether to her disadvantage, either by Conference or by an exchange of views between the Powers. Time will thus be gained, and population, who will naturally be much excited by the Bulgarian and Bosnian incidents, may become calmer.

A factor that will restrain present Government from declaring war is the necessity for keeping large number of troops here to combat a possible reactionary movement.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, as its tenor is indicated.]

No. 314.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 34662/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 6, 1908.

Tel. (No. 156.)⁽¹⁾

D. 5.15 P.M.

Your Telegram No. 58.⁽²⁾

I think it most undesirable to propose a Conference at all until there has been some preliminary understanding as to what questions are to be raised at the Conference and how they will be settled. For instance the question of the passage of the Straits is one which H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t must have time to consider very carefully and for which public opinion in England has hardly had time yet to prepare. Nor do we know yet what objections Turkey may raise to it; nor how Turkey is to be compensated at all for the advantages, which Austria and Bulgaria have gained and other Powers may gain by a revision of the Treaty of Berlin. It would be essential if any Conference is to be a success that there should be preliminary agreement on these points. Cannot Russian Gov[ernmen]t be induced to postpone definite proposal of a Conference?

⁽¹⁾ [Repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 437), October 6, 1908.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 395, No. 311.]

No. 315.

*Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.**Belgrade, October 6, 1908.*

F.O. 34673/31738/08/44A.

D. 6.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 9.)

R. 8 P.M.

My telegram No. 7 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

The King deferred his departure for the manœuvres from yesterday afternoon till seven this morning, and Council of Ministers conferred with His Majesty till late last night. This morning a Royal Ukase appeared in the "Official Gazette," calling in First Reserve "for training." Number estimated at 120,000 men, and Minister of Finance said to have stated that 25,000,000 fr[ancs] was immediately available for this and other military purposes.

The Belgrade press is very excited, and a mass-meeting was held yesterday, while another is announced for this afternoon. The crowd last night cheered the Turkish and British Legations in passing by, no serious insults were offered to the Austrian Legation or Consulate, and organizers of meetings have promised the Government that they will abstain from such.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told the Italian Chargé d'Affaires this morning that the Government were in a most serious dilemma, as they found themselves between war or revolution.

I think his Excellency's fears are exaggerated, and that popular feeling will calm down in a few days.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

No. 316.

*Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.**Berlin, October 6, 1908.*

F.O. 34675/31738/08/44A.

D. 7.38 P.M.

Tel. (No. 52.)

R. 8.30 P.M.

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs informs me that events in Balkans, of which German Government had not been previously informed, place Germany in a position of great embarrassment, as she was forced to choose between her ally Austria and her friends the Turks. As, however, the alliance with Austria had been instrumental in keeping the peace for thirty years, she could not do otherwise than support her ally.

No. 317.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.**Foreign Office, October 6, 1908.*

F.O. 34727/31738/08/44.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 287.)

The Turkish Ambassador has asked me whether a Conference was possible. I have replied that it is possible but that we should require first to have the subjects of discussion defined. In view of this possibility I said it would be very desirable that the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t should consider what in the event of a revision of the Treaty of Berlin would be a fair arrangement as far as her interests are concerned. Territorial compensation I supposed was neither desired nor practical and if that was out of the question some pecuniary compensation might be desired. I did not suggest how such might be obtained, but it seems to me that money is what the new régime most needs. In this connection it may be worth while remarking that Bulgaria has not yet paid any tribute as contemplated by the Treaty of Berlin.

No. 318.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 6, 1908.

F.O. 34674/31738/08/44A.

D. 8.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 45.)

R. 10.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 96 of 5th October: Annexation of occupied provinces.⁽¹⁾

I have made desired representations to Minister for Foreign Affairs.

He expressed astonishment and regret that you should consider annexation as a violation of the Treaty of Berlin. That Treaty contained not one word respecting sovereignty, and accorded to Austria-Hungary rights only, and no restriction on her actions. It was a painful surprise to him that a protest should come from England whose Plenipotentiaries had proposed mandate for Austria-Hungary, and had been notoriously in favour of placing her in definite possession of the two provinces. It was different with Turkey. She had a right to protest under the Convention of 1879, but not the Powers, whose mandate to Austria-Hungary was given in order that the latter should restore and keep order in the provinces.

This mandate she had carried out to the best of her ability, and at the cost of lives of thousands of her soldiers. He could assure me that action now contemplated was the only way of continuing to carry out that mandate. Circumstances had rendered it absolutely necessary that the provinces should have representative institutions, and these could not be granted under the old conditions. What with this necessity and the intolerable situation created by Servian revolutionary propaganda, something had to be done to prevent a dangerous crisis, and he had taken only way out of the difficulty.

He begged me to appeal to you not to raise difficulties, all the more that he was seriously desirous of working side by side with His Majesty's Government in the Near East, as he had shown by his message to you with regard to constitutional movement in Turkey.

He finally regretted that it was impossible for him to accede to your desire for reconsideration of annexation, as the Emperor had already signed all the necessary documents.

I asked his Excellency why, if he admitted Turkey had a right to protest under Convention, he had not consulted her, and endeavoured to come to an agreement. He replied that Turkey would have no other course but to refuse, which would have embittered matters without changing the course of events.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 390, No. 302.]

No. 319.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 34528/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 51.) *En clair.*

Foreign Office, October 6, 1908.

Your telegram No. 41.⁽¹⁾

You should inform Bulg[arian] Gov[ernmen]t that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], who have always hitherto taken a friendly interest in the prosperity and progress of Bulgaria, are unable to approve of the proclamation of Bulgarian independence. We cannot admit the right of any Power to alter an international Treaty without the consent of the contracting parties. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] cannot therefore recognise what has been done till the views of the other Powers are known, especially of Turkey, who is more concerned than any one else.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

No. 320.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 34728/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 6, 1908.

Tel. (No. 53.)

D. 9.15 P.M.

In answer to announcement of Independence from Bulgarian Acting Agent today I told him that we could not recognize a plain violation of the Treaty of Berlin perpetrated without consulting the other Powers including Turkey. In answer to his explanation of the Bulgarian view, which was that the abnormal situation of Bulgaria was intolerable and a danger to peace. I said I could not see that there had been any danger to peace lately, the Gueschoff incident would have been arranged and the action of Bulgaria was very ill timed and would give rise to other complications connected with the Treaty of Berlin, I could only suggest for the moment that she should endeavour to minimize the consequences of her action by making it clear that she intended now to maintain a peaceful and unaggressive attitude. The Acting Agent said Bulgaria had always had the sympathy of England and I replied that this was true when she was the suffering and aggrieved party, but now it was not Bulgaria who was wronged.

No. 321.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 34532/31738/08/44A.

(No. 473.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 6, 1908.

I have received your conf[identia]l desp[atch] No. 381 of yesterday⁽¹⁾ reporting a conversation with the French Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs], in which M. Pichon expressed a desire to have my views on M. Isvolsky's suggestion for dealing with the questions raised by the action of Austria Hungary, in annexing the provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by a Conference of the Powers parties to the Treaty of Berlin.

It is difficult at present to see how the many questions likely to be raised by the illegal actions of Austria and Bulgaria can well be solved in a peaceful manner except by the meeting of a Conference such as Monsieur Isvolsky has suggested. Before H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] consent to take part in any such Conference it would be necessary that there should be a preliminary agreement amongst the Powers who are to take part in it as to what subjects should be discussed, how they should be dealt with, and in what form Turkey can receive any advantage to compensate her for those gained by other Powers at her expense. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] would be ready to consider in a favourable manner, in conjunction with the other Powers, any arrangement made by Turkey with one of the Signatory Powers, but they could only agree to take part in the Conference on the distinct understanding that the occasion is not to be used for the further dismemberment of Turkey, or for the overthrow of the liberal administration recently established in Turkey, which has met with general approval from all the Powers.

I have to request Y[our] E[xc]cellency to submit these views to M. Pichon and to express at the same time the hope that they may coincide with those of the

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 391-2, No. 304.]

French Gov[ernmen]t. In the event of their meeting with M. Pichon's complete concurrence it would be as well to discuss with him the question of obtaining the adhesion to them of the Russian and Italian Gov[ernmen]ts.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 322.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35221/31738/08/44A.

(No. 439.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. October 6, 1908.

Sir,

R. October 12, 1908.

I called by appointment on M. Tcharykoff yesterday afternoon, and told him that no doubt he had received the grave news as to the imminence of the declaration of Bulgarian independence and of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary. I should like, I said, to put to him one question and that was whether it was true that the Russian Government had expressed their concurrence with the step which the Austro-Hungarian Government intended to take. M. Tcharykoff, without giving me a reply, proceeded to discourse on the possible consequences of the action of Bulgaria, which was already an accomplished fact, but I interrupted him and begged him to tell me whether the report which I had mentioned was or was not in accordance with the facts.

He said that he had not heard of any such statement, and he was unaware whether I alluded to some written note from the Austro-Hungarian Government or to a communication to some third party; or whether it was contained in the Imperial letter which had been presented to President Fallières. After a good deal of skirmishing, I said to M. Tcharykoff that I did not wish to press him unduly, nor did I desire to give my question a brusque character, but he should understand that we had been perfectly frank with each other on all the questions which had arisen in the Balkans; that I had always understood that it was the desire of the Russian Government to work cordially with His Majesty's Government in dealing with those questions, and I must confess to him that I had been surprised to hear that in a matter of such importance as the intention of the Austro-Hungarian Government to take a step seriously affecting the Treaty of Berlin, the Russian Government should have expressed views which he must know would, if known, raise a storm in Russian public opinion, and which, he would forgive me for saying, were hardly in harmony with those which from time to time he had expressed to me. I was speaking entirely on my own initiative; I had received no instructions from my Government to make any inquiry on the point which I had mentioned, but I was sure that my Government would be as perplexed as I was if they heard that the report as to the concurrence of Russia was true.

M. Tcharykoff said that he would tell me in confidence what had taken place, but he begged that it should not appear in a Blue Book. The statement to which I had alluded was exaggerated: it was true that a certain confidential and preliminary exchange of views had taken place, but the Russian Government had as yet given no definite reply. They had stated that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina would not be considered by Russia as a *casus belli*, and that Russia would not oppose it. Still, Russia could not admit that one party to a Treaty could alter any of the provisions of that Treaty without consultation with all the other signatory Powers, and the Russian Government were preparing and indeed had

ready a circular despatch to the Powers, proposing that a Conference should be held to revise the Treaty of Berlin and to make alterations in those articles which were onerous to some parties, such as Russia, Turkey and the Balkan States. Now that Bulgaria had declared her independence, and that Austria-Hungary had incorporated or was on the point of incorporating Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Treaty of Berlin was riddled, and there merely remained shreds and tatters. Whoever had announced that Russia had given her concurrence to the action of Austria-Hungary had gone too far; she had not given her consent; all that she had said was that she should not treat it as a *casus belli* and would not oppose it.

I said that I presumed that the exchange of views to which he had referred had taken place at Count Berchtold's country place, as neither the Austrian Ambassador nor the Chargé d'Affaires had been in St. Petersburg for the past fortnight. As M. Tcharykoff seemed disinclined to reply to my observation, I said that I was desirous of telegraphing to my Government what he had told me, and that as it was important that I should not misinterpret his language, I would with his permission write down what I proposed to telegraph, and he could make any corrections which he thought fit. M. Tcharykoff cordially agreed, and I drew up the telegram which I had the honour to send you,⁽¹⁾ with the exception of course of my own impressions. He made one or two alterations in the wording, and I transmitted to you last evening textually the statement which he had made to me. I asked if the Austro-Hungarian Government had been made acquainted with the proposal of the Russian Government for the convocation of a Conference, and he replied in the affirmative. I then inquired of him what, in his opinion, would be the consequences of the two acts which were to be perpetrated this week. He said that all would now depend whether Turkey would take up the gage and go to war with Bulgaria. On this point it was too early to have any positive information. Should hostilities break out, Russia would not assist Bulgaria and would do her utmost to localize the conflict. As to the annexation, Servia would no doubt feel the matter deeply, and he murmured something as to it being possible at the Conference to find some compensation for her and Montenegro. He doubted if the declaration of independence would immediately give rise to a recrudescence of trouble in Macedonia, but it was possible that Greece might put forward some claims. He could not form a definite opinion, as the immediate future was shrouded in obscurity. Roumania, he mentioned, was moving troops, and she might take part against Bulgaria. I may remark in this connection that the Bulgarian Agent had told me a day or two ago that Bulgaria was perfectly tranquil in regard to Roumania.

I asked M. Tcharykoff whether he did not think that the whole affair was not a preconcerted arrangement between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria. He replied that there could be no shadow of a doubt on that head, and that Germany was a friendly observer in the background. The recent policy of Austria was deplorable and tortuous: no confidence could be placed in her, and she had raised a question which might be productive of serious complications. The only way out of the difficulty was the convocation of a Conference, and in this he was anxious that Turkey should have fair play. He trusted that Great Britain would associate herself with Russia in supporting young Turkey. I told him that he need not have the slightest doubt in that respect. He knew well that the policy of my Government was to raise no difficulties in the way of the new movement in Turkey having fair play, and it seemed particularly hard that any check should be given to that movement, and that certain Powers should raise questions which might throw us back into the turmoil and anarchy of recent years.

M. Tcharykoff remarked that doubtless Austria-Hungary and, he must add, Germany disliked the new movement, and regretted the disappearance of the old order of things; but Russia thought that it would be quite possible for her to work with the new movement and establish sympathetic and friendly relations with a renovated Turkey.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 390-1, No. 303.]

He wished that M. Iswolsky was present in St. Petersburg. It would be well that he should pay his visit to London, but in the present crisis the Foreign Minister should be in close touch with the Emperor, and His Majesty had not as yet received a full report of what had passed between M. Iswolsky and the several Foreign Ministers whom he had seen. Moreover there was much preparatory work to be done for the Conference if one were to meet. In all circumstances and throughout whatever events might be sprung upon us his earnest desire, M. Tcharykoff concluded, was to work hand in hand with His Majesty's Government.⁽²⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽²⁾ [See some recollections by M. Tcharykov of this period in *Contemporary Review*, October 1928, pp. 448-51.]

No. 323.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, October 7, 1908.

F.O. 34757/31738/08/44A.

D. 11-11 A.M.

Tel. (No. 53.)

R. 12-50 P.M.

My telegram No. 52 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs with whom I dined last night fears that he may have given me a false impression in saying that the German government had not been previously informed of the events in the Balkans. The phrase employed by the (?) Chancellor in the instructions as to the language he should use was, "the German government had not taken the initiative." It was true that Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] in his conversation with German Secretary of State for F[oreign] A[ffairs] had mentioned the Proclamation of Independence of Bulgaria and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria, but had conveyed the impression that these were remote contingencies and certainly not intimated that they were in any way imminent.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 397, No. 316.]

No. 324.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 7, 1908.

F.O. 34740/31738/08/44A.

D. 12 noon.

Tel. (No. 46.) *En clair*.

R. 11-52 A.M.

Annexation of occupied provinces published this morning in the form of Autograph letter from the Emperor to the president of the council Minister of Foreign Affairs the Common Minister of Finance and a proclamation to the population of the provinces.

No. 325.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, October 7, 1908.

F.O. 34770/31738/08/44A.

D. 1-45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 188.) Pressing.

R. 2-45 P.M.

Your telegram No. 437. Conference.⁽¹⁾

I spoke to acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] this morning. He says that he must issue circular in order to show that there is no connivance between the

⁽¹⁾ [Identical with Tel, No. 156, Sir E. Grey to Sir F. Bertie, *v. supra*, p. 396, No. 314.]

Russian and Austrian Governments and also to (group undecipherable) increase public opinion. But the circular will state the following "owing to action of Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria in abrogating certain articles of the Berlin treaty Russian government propose to the Powers signatory to that treaty to examine question of assembling of a Conference with a view to revision of treaty of Berlin, the date, place, and programme of that conference to be settled by subsequent agreement between the Powers."

He trusts that this will meet your views which he fully shares. Circular will be made public this evening but he doubted if Conference could assemble before next Spring.

MINUTES.

We need not answer till after M. Isvolsky has discussed the matter here. If the Conference was to be at Constantinople it would be some solution to the *amour-propre* of the Turks, but we should have to be sure beforehand that the outcome would be not unsatisfactory to Turkey.

E. G.

I do not like the notion of Constantinople as the seat of a Conference, unless the issues to be discussed be very few, and very strictly defined beforehand. The atmosphere of Oriental intrigue in which everything at Constantinople is bathed, is unfavourable to honest diplomacy. The experiences of 1876 and 1882 illustrate what I mean.

F.

Oct. 8/08.

E. G.

No. 326.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, October 7, 1908.

F.O. 34772/31738/08/44A.

D. 2.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 189.)

R. 3.30 P.M.

My tel[egram] 188.(1) Conference.

Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] has telephoned to me to say that since seeing me he has received a telegram from M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] saying that an arrangement has been arrived at with French and British Governments as to assembling of Conference. He has therefore telegraphed to Paris and London what he proposed to mention in the circular and will hold back latter till he receives a reply as to whether it is approved.

(1) [r. immediately preceding document.]

No. 327.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, October 7, 1908.

F.O. 34786/31738/08/44A.

D. 3.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 191.) Confidential.

R. 5.15 P.M.

Bulgarian independence.

Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] told me today that Austrian Ambassador had given him a memorandum yesterday proposing that Russian Gov[ernmen]t should join with the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t in approaching the Powers with a view to obtaining the recognition of Prince Ferdinand. He did not intend to reply to memorandum but he had told the Ambassador that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t could not possibly take such a step, that they had most strongly discouraged Bulgaria from declaring independence and reproved her action in the matter. Question of recognition was a matter to be discussed between all the Powers probably at a Conference whenever it assembled. Austrian Ambassador asked that

an official communication should be made public in the papers to the effect that Austria had no previous knowledge of Prince Ferdinand's intention and that matter had not been discussed at Buda-Pesth. He agreed to publish text as given to him by the Ambassador and to state that it emanated from a high Austrian official source. In the communication Prince Ferdinand is styled King Ferdinand and as Acting M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] observed it is a document which will receive no credence in any quarter.

Bulgarian Agent also under instructions applied for recognition of Bulgarian independence and received the same reply as was given to Ambassador.

No. 328.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, October 7, 1908.

F.O. 34782/31738/08/44A.

D. 4 P.M.

Tel. (No. 10.)

R. 5.30 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me this morning that the Servian Government would to-day address a telegraphic Circular Powers of the Treaty of Berlin protesting against the annexation of the occupied provinces, and claiming either restoration of the *status quo* or compensation to Serbia by the rectification of the frontier between Bosnia and the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, so as to join Serbia and Montenegro. They will also ask for reversion of rights relinquished by Austria-Hungary in the sanjak. His Excellency considered that by conceding this would give proof of their *bona fides*.

Ukaze published yesterday will only be used to call in enough reservists to replace time-expired men who leave after manœuvres, a measure rendered necessary by the popular excitement which continues in Belgrade and provinces.

No. 329.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 34772/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 439.)

Foreign Office, October 7, 1908.

Your tel[egram] No. 189.⁽¹⁾

No arrangement has been made as to proposing a Conference, so far as we know. We have told the French Gov[ernmen]t that we should like the Russian Gov[ernmen]t to defer the proposal until there has been a preliminary discussion.

In the meantime the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t have proposed a Conference to discuss the situation of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia and the various interests assured to Turkey by Intern[ationa]l Treaties.

Repeated to Paris (No. 158), October 7, 1908.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 403, No. 326.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 35115/31738/08/44.

(No. 109.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 7, 1908.

The Austrian Chargé d'Affaires called at the Foreign Office by appointment this morning, and communicated to Sir Charles Hardinge officially the accompanying Note from his Government, announcing the annexation of the Provinces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. You will observe that in reading this Note no use is made of the word "annexation." It merely states that the Cabinet of Vienna finds itself "under the imperative necessity of freeing itself from the reserves contained in the Convention of Constantinople, and of resuming, as regards Bosnia and Herzegovina, its complete liberty of action."

Sir Charles Hardinge acknowledged receipt of the communication, and read to Count Széchényi the telegram, No. 96,⁽¹⁾ which I addressed to Your Excellency on the 5th October, instructing you to remind Baron d'Aehrenthal of the Protocol of January 17th, 1871, and stating that His Majesty's Government could not approve of a violation of the Treaty of Berlin nor recognize an alteration of it, when the other Powers—and in this case especially Turkey—have not been consulted.

Count Széchényi remarked that the tone of this representation was not very friendly. He was told that it was not meant to be unfriendly, but that His Majesty's Government naturally resented this mine being sprung upon them at a moment when they were endeavouring to mediate between Turkey and Bulgaria.

He asked what Baron d'Aehrenthal's reply had been and was informed that we had just received a telegram from Your Excellency in which you reported that Baron d'Aehrenthal had, in stating that the Berlin Treaty did not contain one word about sovereignty, implied that it was only Turkey that had a right to protest against the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and that the annexation could not be regarded as a violation of the Treaty. It was pointed out to Count Széchényi that in the Treaty of Berlin the only provision made affecting the two Provinces was that they should be occupied and administered by Austria. Had the sovereignty of these two Provinces been given to Austria, they would have been annexed to that Empire at the time of the signature of the Treaty. Moreover, in the Preamble of the Austrian Convention with Turkey of April 21st, 1879, it is distinctly stated that the fact of the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina "does not affect the rights of sovereignty of His Imperial Majesty the Sultan." This clause is stated as a preliminary condition to the provisions of the Treaty.

He did not argue the point further, but merely stated that the real reason for the immediate necessity of annexing the two Provinces was the Servian propaganda that was being carried on there, in which King Peter himself was implicated, as could be shown by papers in the possession of the Austrian Foreign Office.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 330.

Note communicated by Count Széchényi.

Pour assurer le développement pacifique des territoires situés au sud de la frontière de la Monarchie, le traité de Berlin confia à l'Autriche-Hongrie l'administration de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine avec en plus le droit de garnison dans le Sandjak de Novibazar, en réservant aux Gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Turquie de s'entendre à ce sujet. Cette entente fut amenée par la convention de Constantinople

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 390, No. 302.]

signée le 21 avril 1879, qui prévoyait la présence simultanée de garnisons austro-hongroises et ottomanes dans certaines localités du Sandjak.

Le but visé par cette coopération amicale des troupes austro-hongroises et ottomanes a été pleinement atteint : nous avons réussi à maintenir l'ordre et à assurer la paix de l'Europe, qu'une conflagration dans ces parages aurait pu facilement mettre en danger.

Depuis, la situation a subi un changement radical. La Turquie alors affaiblie par les suites d'une guerre sanglante et impuissante à assurer à elle seule l'ordre et la tranquillité dans le Sandjak, s'est recueillie pendant les trente années qui suivirent la signature de la convention de Constantinople. Le mouvement politique surtout qui s'y manifeste à l'heure qu'il est sous les auspices de Sa Majesté le Sultan, laisse entrevoir une affirmation de l'idée de l'État ottoman et par là une consolidation des bases de l'Empire même.

Dans ces circonstances le Cabinet de Vienne se plaît à espérer que le Gouvernement ottoman réussira sans autre appui à maintenir l'ordre dans le Sandjak et à remplir seul dans ces contrées la tâche qui y incombait jusqu'à présent à la coopération des deux Gouvernements.

Aussi le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal n'a-t-il pas hésité à informer la Sublime Porte qu'il renonçait à faire valoir à l'avenir les droits que la convention de Constantinople lui a conférés par rapport au Sandjak de Novibazar. Quant aux troupes Impériales et Royales, le Gouvernement Ottoman a été également informé qu'elles ont reçu l'ordre d'évacuer les localités où elles tiennent garnison.

Par ce fait de haute importance le Cabinet de Vienne n'entend pas seulement donner au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman une preuve éclatante de sa confiance et de ses sentiments sincèrement amicaux, il oppose par là en même temps le démenti le plus formel aux bruits qui lui prêtaient des ambitions égoïstes et des convoitises territoriales.

En portant à la connaissance du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman son intention de ne plus faire appel aux dispositions de la convention de Constantinople en tant qu'elles se rapportent au Sandjak de Novibazar, le Cabinet de Vienne crut nécessaire de préciser en même temps sa manière de voir quant aux autres questions spécifiées dans cette même convention.

La mission que le traité de Berlin lui a confiée en Bosnie et en Herzégovine, l'Autriche-Hongrie l'a remplie pour le bien de ces populations et dans l'intérêt même de l'Empire Ottoman. En effet, seule la situation créée en Bosnie et en Herzégovine par le traité de Berlin et maintenue à l'état de stabilité par l'Autriche-Hongrie a permis à la Turquie de concentrer ses forces pour la sauvegarde de l'intégrité territoriale de l'Empire.

La Bosnie et l'Herzégovine sont arrivées aujourd'hui—grâce au travail assidu de l'administration austro-hongroise—à un haut degré de culture matérielle et intellectuelle ; le moment paraît donc venu de couronner l'œuvre entreprise en octroyant à ces provinces les bienfaits d'un régime autonome et constitutionnel ardemment désiré par la population entière. Le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal doit cependant pour réaliser ses intentions généreuses régler d'une façon précise la situation de ces deux provinces et pourvoir à une garantie efficace contre les dangers qui pourraient menacer la stabilité du régime établi en 1878. Le Cabinet de Vienne se voit donc devant l'impérieuse nécessité de s'affranchir des réserves contenues dans la convention de Constantinople et de reprendre quant à la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine son entière liberté d'action.

Le Gouvernement austro-hongrois a eu soin d'informer la Sublime Porte par l'intermédiaire de l'Ambassade Impériale et Royale à Constantinople du point de vue ci-dessus exposé ; il a en même temps exprimé l'espoir que les relations entre les deux pays, délivrées de l'incertitude de la situation en Bosnie-Herzégovine et dans le Sandjak ne feront que gagner en présence de l'état de choses bien défini et normal que nous voulons établir.

Veuillez, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, porter ce qui précède à la connaissance du Gouvernement auprès duquel Vous êtes accrédité et laisser sur demande copie de la présente dépêche entre les mains de Monsieur le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères.
Recevez, &c.

[*ED. NOTE.*—On the 6th October the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador at Constantinople presented a note announcing the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary and her evacuation of the Sanjak of Novibazar.]

No. 331.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Egerton.

F.O. 35116/31738/08/44
(No. 133.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 7, 1908.

The Councillor of the Italian Embassy called here this afternoon and stated on behalf of his Government that in view of various rumours which are current to the effect that Italy was aware of the intentions of Austria-Hungary in regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina and that an agreement had been previously arrived at between the two countries, Monsieur Tittoni wished to give a positive denial to any such statements.

The view held by the Italian Government was that the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin should have been consulted before any action was taken such as that of Austria-Hungary.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 332.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34802/31738/08/44A.
(No. 389.)

Sir,

*Paris, D. October 7, 1908.**R. October 8, 1908.*

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith extracted from the "Temps" of this evening's issue, an interview given by M. Izvolsky to M. Tardieu, Foreign Editor of that paper.⁽¹⁾

M. Izvolsky denies that the Austro-Hungarian Government had obtained the approval of Russia in the matter of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. As regards Bulgaria the Russian Government had urged with the greatest insistence that she should abstain from any *coup de tête* [*sic*], and M. Izvolsky expressed his entire disapproval of her action. Europe could not admit this double blow dealt at the Treaty of Berlin and at the *status quo* in the East without being guilty of a veritable abdication—a proceeding to which Russia would not be a party.

Monsieur Izvolsky stated that he had noted with pleasure that the entire French Press had accepted and advocated the idea of the meeting of a Conference to settle matters, and that it was certain that a proposal to this end would be made in a few days. His Excellency did not see how any one could refuse to accept it. Its duty would be to discuss the compensations due to the States interested, and first and foremost to Turkey. Russia had borne for 30 years a state of things aimed against

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

her, and also, in large measure, against the Balkan States and Turkey. The *status quo* respected by Russia against her own interests had now been violated, and a revision of the Treaty by legal methods should now take place. His Excellency added that he was glad to say that the Russian Government could count on the active support of their ally France; he would be in London in a day or two and would then be able to discuss the situation with the English Ministers. He did not doubt that, seeing the cordial relations now existing between the two countries, he would be able to arrive at an agreement as to the view to be taken of the situation. This policy would, he felt certain, be favourably judged in Berlin, Vienna, and Rome.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

No. 333.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34918/31738/08/44A.

(No. 390.)

Sir,

Paris, D. October 7, 1908.

R. October 9, 1908.

By your telegram No. 154 of the 5th instant⁽¹⁾ which reached me on the morning of the 6th, you instructed me to inform the French Government of the purport of the communication which you made to the Turkish Ambassador in regard to the replies which His Majesty's Government intended to make to the announcements of the Proclamation of the Independence of Bulgaria and of the annexation by Austria of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁽²⁾

In reply to an enquiry as to when the Minister for Foreign Affairs could receive me, he appointed five o'clock, but as I thought it important that the French Government should be acquainted at once with the information which you had telegraphed to me I went to the Ministry of the Interior a little before noon and asked to see the President of the Council with whom I found the Minister for Foreign Affairs. I found that they had already learned from the French Ambassador in London the purport of your communication to the Turkish Ambassador, but they were not aware of the terms of the communication which you had instructed His Majesty's Ambassador to make to the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs which I read to them,⁽³⁾ viz., to remind His Excellency of the Protocol of January 17, 1871, attached to the Treaty of London to which Austria-Hungary was a party, in which it is laid down that no Power can break its treaty engagements or modify their stipulations except by friendly agreement and with the assent of the contracting parties; that His Majesty's Government could not approve of an open violation of the Treaty of Berlin nor recognise an alteration of it when the other Powers, and in the present case Turkey especially, have not been consulted, and further to urge the necessity of a reconsideration of the intention which the Austro-Hungarian Government had announced of annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina.

M. Clemenceau and Monsieur Pichon expressed satisfaction at the communication to be made to the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

Monsieur Clemenceau then informed me that the Russian Government intended to propose a Conference of the Berlin Treaty Powers and to make the proposal on the 8th instant. The French Government considered however that it would be much preferable that Russia, France, and England should act together in making this proposal and they attach the greatest possible importance to His Majesty's Govern-

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 395, No. 311, note 1.]

⁽²⁾ [The substance of the despatch had already been communicated to Sir E. Grey in telegrams No. 58 of Oct. 6 (*v. supra*, p. 395, No. 311), and No. 59 of Oct. 7, *recd.* Oct. 8. For the communication to the Turkish Ambassador, *v. supra*, p. 388, No. 296.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 390, No. 302.]

ment adopting this suggestion. They think that the issue of the invitation by the three Powers would have a great and good moral effect in Europe. Turkey being the aggrieved and interested party it would, they consider be a mistake to ask her to join in proposing a conference. They believed that Italy can be induced to act with France Russia and England in the Conference.

M. Clemenceau having to go to the South of France to make a speech, requested me to endeavour to obtain your reply as soon as possible. It reached me last night⁽⁴⁾ and this morning I saw M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon at the Ministry of the Interior. I took with me and read to them and left with M. Pichon an *aide-mémoire* of your answer. I enclose a copy of it herein. I reminded them that there had been a preliminary agreement between England and Russia before the meeting of the Congress of Berlin, and had there not been such an understanding the Congress would certainly have been a failure, and even with it there was at one moment nearly a breakdown owing to differences between the Russian and British Plenipotentiaries. In the present case unless there were consultation between Russia, France and England in communication with the Porte with the view to an understanding on a programme and as to what those Powers could agree to, the meeting of a Conference would be likely to cause grave complications.

M. Clemenceau observed that unless a Conference took place without delay he feared that war would break out. I replied that His Majesty's Government could not accept a proposal for a Conference if made without the preliminary consultation and understanding described in the *aide-mémoire* which I had given to him, and I suggested that as M. Isvolsky had arranged to go to London on the 9th instant, he could discuss the matter with you and that meanwhile the French Government should urge the Russian Government to refrain from making the proposal. M. Clemenceau said that if as I stated His Majesty's Government would not accept, the French Government would do their utmost to have the proposal delayed, but he hoped that the delay would be short for it would be dangerous for the maintenance of Peace. Both M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon stated that they did not mean to suggest that a Conference should meet without a settled programme. The Russian Government M. Pichon explained, would be ready to agree that apart from the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Declaration of Independence by Bulgaria, there should be no diminution of Ottoman territory. On this M. Clemenceau said that he must make reservations in that respect in regard to Crete, whereupon I observed that certain assurances had been given by the Powers to the Sultan and this would preclude His Majesty's Government from consenting to a discussion of the question in the Conference. M. Pichon also made objection, and M. Clemenceau waived his reservations.

With regard to the expectation expressed by M. Clemenceau and M. Pichon at my interview with them yesterday that Italy could be brought to act with France Russia and England, I called their attention to the speech by M. Tittoni referred to in this morning's newspapers which showed that he was privy to the schemes initiated by Baron d'Aehrenthal, and that though the hands of the Italian Government might not be tied by any written engagements, it was evident that Italy could not be relied on to act with France and England. This they admitted.

With regard to the question of the Straits which I had stated might seriously affect the position of the Government in England if they accepted to consider it in Conference without the knowledge of the public and without an understanding with Turkey as to any concessions to be made to Russia, M. Clemenceau admitted that the question was one for the discussion of which public opinion in England might require some preparation and time for consultation between His Majesty's Government and the Porte.

M. Clemenceau wound up the conversation by summarising the intentions and views of the French Government. They would, in view of the objections of His

(4) [v. *supra*, p. 396, No. 314.]

Majesty's Government to an immediate proposal for a Conference do their best to persuade the Russian Government to postpone the proposal so that a programme might be arranged and an understanding be come to if possible between Russia France and England in communication with the Porte as to the arrangements which they could accept in a Conference, but the period for coming to such an understanding must be short for otherwise war might break out.

I had the honour of transmitting to you by my telegrams Nos. 58 and 59 of yesterday and to-day the substance of my present despatch.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

Enclosure in No. 333.

Aide-mémoire communicated by Sir F. Bertie to M. Pichon.

Until there has been some preliminary understanding as to what matters are to be discussed and how they will be settled it would, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, be most undesirable to propose a Conference.

If the question of the Straits is to be brought forward His Majesty's Government must have time to examine it very carefully. They do not know what Turkish objections there may be and public opinion in England has not yet had time to be prepared for a discussion of it. His Majesty's Government have not yet considered how Turkey is to be compensated for the advantages which Bulgaria and Austria have obtained and other Powers may obtain by a revision of the Berlin Treaty of 1878. There should be a preliminary agreement on these points if any Conference is to be successful.

His Majesty's Government would suggest that the Russian Government should be induced to postpone making any definite proposal for a Conference.

No. 334.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, October 8, 1908.

I think that I can with confidence inform you that we may count upon Russia working with us throughout the various developments of the situation which has arisen, and of her doing her best to second us in endeavouring to assist Turkey. This good feeling towards Turkey has been awakened by the action of Austria, and it is not for the "beaux yeux" of the young Turks, but rather with the view of strengthening Russia's position in resisting what she regards as an attack of Germanism on Slav interests. But it should be remembered that Russia to satisfy public opinion will require "compensations" and it is clear that she considers that compensation can best be accorded by freeing the egress from the Straits. Leaving aside the Mediterranean Powers, I do not know if the idea of the Russian Gov[ernment], which Tcharykoff begged should be kept strictly secret, to waive their claims to further payments by Turkey of the War Indemnity will induce the latter to accept any modification of the Treaty provisions concerning the Straits. But I feel sure if Turkey maintains her views that the scope of a conference should be strictly limited to the questions of Bulgarian independence and the incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russia will not agree. She would consider that such a restricted conference would only lead to giving international confirmation to accomplished facts;

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

and would place her in a difficult position and in a sense a humiliating one. So far as I can understand public opinion here and also the views of the Gov[ernmen]t the situation is generally regarded in the following light. They are annoyed with Bulgaria having disregarded their advice and chosen an inopportune moment for declaring her independence. Against the independence *per se* they have in reality no objection—but they would have liked, at a proper and suitable occasion, to have been themselves the authors and initiators of this act—and not allowed, Austrian communiqués notwithstanding, to have it generally regarded as having been done with the sanction of Austria. Furthermore they consider that Prince Ferdinand by his action allowed himself to be the means of facilitating the “coup” in Bosnia perpetrated by Austria. They are therefore indignant with Bulgaria for the time.

In regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina the matter is somewhat different, and I think that here the feeling is more deepseated and more sincere. From several points of view the action of Austria is regarded with deep discontent, but as it has been accomplished, and without a war, which Russia naturally has no intention of undertaking, cannot be reversed, it will have to be accepted, when it has been “regularised” by international agreement. But I come back to where I started, that in such a case Russia will require “compensations”—and I should not like to say with certainty that if we do not fall in with this view we shall be able to count upon her cooperation throughout the difficult and complicated phases which the newly created situation opens out. The above, in a few words, are my impressions—they may be disproved by future events, but I give them to you for what they may be worth.

I wish that it were possible to know exactly what passed between Iswolsky and d'Aehrenthal. Here they have no very exact knowledge, and it was only two or three days ago that Tcharykoff told me that Iswolsky had not yet made a full report to the Emperor as to what had taken place. I know Iswolsky very well, and I do not think that he gave his “concurrence” to the Austrian project: but think that it is quite possible that he went a little further than was prudent, and did not show that decided opposition which the circumstances demanded.⁽²⁾ He is often not firm in personal conversation—and is unwilling to say anything which might appear to be displeasing to his interlocutors, especially when he is their guest—this is a weak trait in his character. I have often found him anxious to flee away from serious verbal argument. He loves academical discussions in which he can review the world from China to Peru, but he does not like the hard give and take of an argumentative conversation. My own opinion is that he was a little yielding in his opposition, and a little too discursive in examining possible compensations. However this question is almost one of past history: and he has now been compelled to pull himself together and to take a decisive line. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 383, No. 292 and *note*. Sir Charles Hardinge's opinion on this matter was strongly expressed to the King in a letter of April 7, 1909, quoted in Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), Vol. II, p. 645, *n. cp.* also Emperor Nicholas's account, *infra*, pp. 479–80, No. 425. With regard to what passed at Buchlau, references to many authorities are given in *G.P.* XXVI, I, pp. 30–2 *n.*, *p.* also Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 191–2.]

⁽³⁾ [The last part of this letter refers to the calling of a Conference, and is unimportant.]

II. SUGGESTIONS FOR A CONFERENCE, OCTOBER- NOVEMBER 1908.

[*ED. NOTE.*—For the previous suggestion for a Conference *v.* Sir F. Bertie's Telegram No. 58 of October 6 on p. 395, No. 311, and despatch No. 381 of October 5, pp. 391-2, No. 304, and Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie, Telegram No. 156 of October 6, p. 396, No. 314.

Articles 25 and 29 of the Treaty of Berlin of 1878, which are constantly referred to, are printed below.

Articles 25 and 29 of the Treaty of Berlin.⁽¹⁾

ARTICLE 25.

Les Provinces de Bosnie et d'Herzégovine seront occupées et administrées par l'Autriche-Hongrie.

Le Gouvernement d'Autriche-Hongrie ne désirant pas se charger de l'administration du Sandjak de Novi-Bazar, qui s'étend entre la Serbie et le Monténégro dans la direction sud-est jusqu'au delà de Mitrovitza, l'Administration Ottomane continuera d'y fonctionner. Néanmoins, afin d'assurer le maintien du nouvel état politique ainsi que la liberté et la sécurité des voies de communication, l'Autriche-Hongrie se réserve le droit de tenir garnison et d'avoir des routes militaires et commerciales sur toute l'étendue de cette partie de l'ancien Vilayet de Bosnie. A cet effet les Gouvernements d'Autriche-Hongrie et de Turquie se réservent de s'entendre sur les détails.

ARTICLE 29.

1. Antivari et son littoral sont annexés au Monténégro sous les conditions suivantes :—

2. Les contrées situées au sud de ce territoire, d'après la délimitation ci-dessus déterminée, jusqu'à la Bojana, y compris Dulcinjo, seront restituées à la Turquie.

3. La commune de Spica jusqu'à la limite septentrionale du territoire indiqué dans la description détaillée des frontières sera incorporée à la Dalmatie.

4. Il y aura pleine et entière liberté de navigation sur la Bojana pour le Monténégro. Il ne sera pas construit de fortifications sur le parcours de ce fleuve à l'exception de celles qui seraient nécessaires à la défense locale de la place de Scutari, lesquelles ne s'étendront pas au delà d'une distance de 6 kilomètres de cette ville.

5. Le Monténégro ne pourra avoir ni bâtiments ni pavillon de guerre.

6. Le port d'Antivari et toutes les eaux du Monténégro resteront fermées aux bâtiments de guerre de toutes les nations.

7. Les fortifications situées entre le lac et le littoral sur le territoire Monténégrin seront rasées, et il ne pourra en être élevé de nouvelles dans cette zone.

8. La police maritime et sanitaire, tant à Antivari que le long de la côte du Monténégro, sera exercée par l'Autriche-Hongrie au moyen de bâtiments légers garde-côtes.

9. Le Monténégro adoptera la législation maritime en vigueur en Dalmatie. De son côté, l'Autriche-Hongrie s'engage à accorder sa protection consulaire au pavillon marchand Monténégrin.

10. Le Monténégro devra s'entendre avec l'Autriche-Hongrie sur le droit de construire et d'entretenir à travers le nouveau territoire Monténégrin une route et un chemin de fer.

11. Une entière liberté de communications sera assurée sur ces voies.]

(1) [*B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 69, pp. 758 and 760.]

No. 335.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34910/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 60.) *En clair.*

Paris, October 8, 1908.

Near East.

Political Director says that he can answer for it that the views stated in your despatch No. 473 of the 6th instant⁽¹⁾ coincide with those now held by the French Government. Two days ago there appeared to them to be great danger of war unless

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 399-40, No. 321.]

the proposal for a Conference were at once accepted in principle. Since then, owing to the calm and prudent attitude of the Turkish Government, the danger has diminished, and they are content to await the result of M. Isvolsky's coming negotiations in London for arranging a programme for a Conference, and settling what Russia and England, in concert with France, may agree to in such a Conference. When they are agreed it will be necessary to consult with the Turkish Government, and when the four Powers are in accord it may be desirable to confer with the Italian Government before the formal proposal for a Conference is made.

No. 336.

Sir E. Egerton to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, October 8, 1908.

F.O. 35001/31738/08/44A.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 44.)

R. 10 P.M.

(Repetition.)

My tel[egram] No. 43 of today.⁽¹⁾

Italian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] does not propose to answer Austrian, Bulgarian and Turkish notes.

He thinks a Conference the only solution, and seemed to fear you might object on account of delicacy of questions which might be raised.

He wishes the Conference to be composed of Ministers for F[oreign] A[ffairs], as it would finish sooner and he would prefer London.

The revision of Articles 25 and 29 of the Berlin Treaty is what he evidently most holds to.

A Conference only on Bulgaria, as proposed by the Turkish Ambassador, was he said out of the question.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 337.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 34828/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 6.)

Foreign Office, October 8, 1908.

Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] inform Signatory Powers of Treaty of Berlin that they have asked Servian Gov[ernment] for explanation of calling out of reserves which seems to be a measure directed against them and that if explanation is not satisfactory they will be forced to take counter measures for protection of their territory.⁽¹⁾

You should strongly urge Servian Gov[ernment] in their own interest to show moderation and maintain correct attitude.

Advice in this sense has been given to the Servian Chargé d'Affaires.

Repeated to :—Paris (No. 168), Berlin (No. 112), Vienna (No. 109), Rome (No. 108), St. Petersburg (No. 447), Sofia (No. 57), Constantinople (No. 300), Bucharest (No. 4). October 8, 1908.

(¹) [This communication was made by Count Széchenyi to Sir E. Grey on October 7. The following minute was written on it by Sir E. Grey at the end of a longer commentary by Sir C. Hardinge, which is not here reproduced : "Count Mensdorff asked me today whether we had acted on the Austrian request to deprecate a breach of the peace by Servia and I said that when the Servian Chargé d'Affaires had lodged his protest here we had already advised Servia in her own interests to be moderate. E. G." v. despatch No. 47 of October 5 to Mr. Whitehead, p. 394, No. 308.]

No. 338.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34905/31738/08/44.

Therapia, D. October 8, 1908, 9:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 304.) Confidential.

R. October 9, 1908, 8:30 A.M.

Bulgaria.

Grand Vizier and Minister for Foreign Affairs are not quite easy as to the attitude of Russia in the matter of recognition of independence.

Minister for Foreign Affairs told me confidentially that he had learnt both from St. Petersburg and Paris that Russia was prepared to go to a Conference on condition that the riverain Black Sea States should have exclusive freedom of passage of Dardanelles, in return for which, if obtainable, Russia would abandon the capitulation of the war indemnity, amounting to some 25,000,000*l.*, and Russian post offices in Turkey. He seemed suspicious of these suggestions, and anxious that the Conference should be limited to the two questions now raised by Austria and Bulgaria.

Kiamil Pasha said that Porte would have special reserves to make as to (?her) rights in Eastern Roumelia, whatever the ultimate decision might be as to Bulgaria proper.

MINUTES.

This may wait until M. Isvolsky's views are ascertained as to the Dardanelles.

L. M.

If the Conference is limited to the discussion of questions now raised by Austria and Bulgaria we know in advance that Austria will refuse to take part in it, and it is not likely that Russia would agree to such a limitation. On the other hand if the scope of the Conference is widened and the question of the Straits is there discussed and modifications introduced in favour of Russia there will almost certainly be an outcry in this country unless something really substantial is done for Turkey which will at the same time strengthen the position of the Young Turk party and give a material proof that England, France and Russia intend to stand by and support that party.

Mr. Tyrrell has made an excellent suggestion that these three Powers should propose to the other Powers as a preliminary measure an international guarantee of a foreign loan to Turkey. This loan should be devoted to internal administration and development and not regarded as the sinews of war. If the other Powers agree to join in the guarantee they will thus be pledged to the support of the reform party. If they decline England France and Russia should give the guarantee and this will constitute an immense moral and material support to the new administration. The Turkish Gov[ernmen]t having support of this kind will be able, without loss of pride or prestige, to admit modifications in the *status quo* of the Dardanelles, Crete, etc., and it would then be possible to discuss these questions with the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t in a friendly and satisfactory manner. Russia has probably already obtained the assent of the other Powers to her proposals relating to the Dardanelles, and it seems to me that the only way to get a solution of this question to the satisfaction of Turkey, of the Russian Gov[ernmen]t and of public opinion in England would be by friendly discussion between Russia Turkey and ourselves. after Turkey has been made well disposed towards Russia and ourselves by moral and material support to be given to the reform party.

C. H.

We must hear what M. Isvolsky thinks of this. If practicable it would be a definite step in favour of Turkey, which would relieve the tension.

E. G.

No. 339.

*Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.**Constantinople, October 8, 1908.*

F.O. 34907/31738/08/44.

D. 9:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 306.)

R. 11:15 P.M.

Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Minister for Foreign Affairs drew attention of Austrian Ambassador to a declaration made by Austrian Delegates at the Berlin Conference, to the effect that occupation

was to be considered as temporary. I cannot, however, find any such declaration in the Protocols.

Austrian Ambassador has informed Minister for Foreign Affairs that Austria would not agree to a Conference if this question were included in programme.

Turkish protest to Powers is being despatched to-night.

No. 340.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 34954/31738/08/44A.

Paris, D. October 8, 1908, 11.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 61.)

R. October 9, 1908, 12.42 A.M.

Near East.

I met Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-night.

He says that Austria will not be able to refuse to come to Conference, and that she must pay for the enfranchisement of Bosnia and Herzegovina; that it is essential that there should be a preliminary understanding that there is to be no diminution of Ottoman territory.

He has, he says, administered some cooling medicine to the Servian Minister here, who is very excited about the rights of his country, and has been using some very warlike language.

No. 341.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, October 9, 1908.

F.O. 35005/31738/08/44A.

D. 1.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 63.)

R. 3 P.M.

Servia.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs'] advice to the Servian Gov[ernment] similar to that contained in your telegram to Belgrade No. 6 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾ He says the Russian Government have warned the Servian Government that they must not expect any support from Russia if they bring on themselves, by their foolish proceedings, the resentment of Austria.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 413, No. 337.]

No. 342.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, October 9, 1908.

F.O. 35013/31738/08/44A.

D. 1.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 64.)

R. 3.40 P.M.

Montenegro.

Your telegram No. 167 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] will reply to the telegram from Montenegrin M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that the treaty of Berlin cannot be modified without the consent of Contracting Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 343.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 35019/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 9, 1908.

Tel. (No. 176.)

D. 4:30 P.M.

Inform the French Gov[ernmen]t that I agree to a simultaneous and immediate declaration to the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t that the Treaty of Berlin cannot be modified without an agreement between the signatory Powers and that I have instructed Sir G. Lowther to coöperate with his French and Russian colleagues in this sense.

I am however of opinion that if similar declaration is made at Sofia it seems essential that it should be made also at Vienna and we would be ready to join in making it there if the French and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts agree.

No. 344.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, October 9, 1908.

F.O. 35032/31738/08/44A.

D. 5:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 12.)

R. 10 P.M.

I communicated to Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning your telegram No. 6 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

His Excellency assured me that Servian Government had absolutely no intention of embarking on an adventurous policy, futility of which was obvious, and that only a sufficient number of reservists would be called out to maintain the army at its legal peace footing of 35,000 men. This they considered necessary in view of the excitement in the country and the disturbed situation in the Balkans, but a Great Power like Austria-Hungary could not possibly interpret it as a menace.

The demonstrations in the streets of Belgrade, of which the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires had also complained, have become most inconvenient to the Servian Government, as public opinion condemns the mild tone of the Servian Circular to the Powers, and the crowd yesterday forced a deputation into the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to protest against it. Organizers of the meetings have now been informed that the police and troops have orders to prevent further demonstrations.

The Skuptchina will meet to-morrow, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs hopes that it will prove reasonable, although he does not expect it to be as moderate as the present Government, and fears that they may have to resign.

His Excellency asked whether I thought that the Servian Government ought to inform the Signatory Powers that they were strongly in favour of a Conference for a revision of the Treaty of Berlin. I replied that I thought that this was hardly necessary, as in the circumstances it would be taken for granted.

French and Italian Chargés d'Affaires, by order of their Governments, gave counsels of moderation this morning similar to mine. Message given by the latter advised Servia to await the decisions of the Conference.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 413, No. 337.]

No. 345.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 9, 1908.

F.O. 35030/31738/08/44A.

D. 7-30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 49.)

R. 9 P.M.

Following from Consul at Buda-Pesth :—

“ Five monitors and three patrol-boats left Buda-Pesth for south.”

Measures of partial mobilization have also been carried out in the corps d'armée districts bordering on Bosnia and Herzegovina, and on Russian frontier.

These measures consist in the retention of time-expired men, and in calling out of a certain number of reserves. The officers of the reserve, though not actually called out, have been ordered to hold themselves in readiness.

The army of occupation in the provinces to be entirely mobilized; the manufacturies of ammunition and tinned provisions have been ordered to increase their production. Two sanitary trains have been mobilized at Vienna, Buda-Pesth.

The Servian frontier along Danube and Dring [*sic*, Drina] is being patrolled by detachments of troops, while the line of the Save is guarded by a brigade of cavalry and a division of infantry. Increase of production of new field artillery has also been ordered.

These measures are regarded as purely defensive, and it is considered that in present doubtful situation Austria-Hungary could do no less.

No. 346.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Constantinople, October 9, 1908.

F.O. 35025/31738/08/44.

D. 9 P.M.

Tel. (No. 311.)

R. 11-45 P.M.

German Ambassador to-day made the following declaration in writing to the Grand Vizier :—

“ By order of the Emperor the Ambassador is instructed to give a most categorical denial to the statements that Germany had a previous *entente* with Austria or any other Power on the subject of recent events in Balkans.”

No. 347.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 35019/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 306.)

Foreign Office, October 9, 1908.

French Gov[ernment] have proposed that, in order to demonstrate to the Turkish Gov[ernment] their attitude towards them in view of recent events in the Balkans, the Representatives of England France and Russia should simultaneously and without delay make a declaration to the Porte that the Treaty of Berlin cannot be modified without an agreement between the Signatory Powers.

The Russian Gov[ernment] have agreed and you are authorised to co-operate with your French and Russian colleagues in this sense.

No. 348.

Sir Edward Grey to Montenegrin Minister for Foreign Affairs.

F.O. 34796/31738/08/44A.

Tel. *En clair.*

Foreign Office, October 9, 1908.

I have the honour to ack[nowled]ge the receipt of your tel[egram] of the 7th inst[ant]⁽¹⁾ and to inform you that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t also regard the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a violation of the Treaty of Berlin, and cannot admit the right of any Power to alter an international Treaty without the consent of the contracting parties.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 349.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 35410/31738/08/44.

(No. 428.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 9, 1908.

The Turkish Ambassador handed me to-day a protest against the action of Austria, and he read me a passage from the protest to prove that what had been done was a violation of the Treaty of Berlin.

I told him we had already stated that we could not recognise anything which had happened without the other parties to the Treaty being consulted. With regard to Crete, I told him we had telegraphed to our Consul at Canea to inform the Cretan Government that we could not admit or allow a Treaty of Independence and Union with Greece without our consent and that of the other Powers. We had communicated this view to the other Powers and to Greece, and we were now asking them to act in concert on this view.

The Ambassador said he had noticed that four cruisers had left Malta.

I told him they were intended to go to Marmarice in case there should be disturbances in Crete. We had still some troops there, and it might be necessary to protect them during the excitement which might follow our refusal to recognise the independence of Crete and its union with Greece.

The Ambassador asked whether the cruisers would prevent a landing of Greek troops in Crete.

I said I did not think Greece would send any troops; but our ships had been sent because we could not foresee what action might become necessary to protect our troops or maintain our obligations to Turkey.

The Ambassador asked me whether the idea of a Conference had made any progress in the last day or two.

I told him it had not. Before being committed to a Conference I should require to know what questions were likely to be raised. We could not, for instance, commit ourselves to a Conference in which the question of the Straits was likely to be raised, unless we had discussed the question previously both with Turkey and with Russia.

The Ambassador inquired whether, under any circumstances, we should consent to an alteration of the regulations about the Straits.

I said we had felt for some years that the international denial to Russia of all egress through the Straits was a thing which could not be maintained for ever. But I had not thought the question would be raised so soon, and I should like first to know the views of the Turkish Government about it.

The Ambassador said he thought the Turks would feel that an alteration in the status of the Straits would lay their country open to a *coup de main*.

I told him that any such thing as this would certainly have to be guarded against in whatever alteration might be made. I should not know till I had seen M. Iswolsky whether the question of the Straits was to be raised at all. In any case, I would consult the Turkish Government about it if it had to be raised.

[I am, &c.]

F. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

[ED. NOTE.—There does not seem any evidence for the suggestion of Baron von Marschall from Constantinople of October 10 (*G.P.* XXVI, I, pp. 142-3) that Sir Gerard Lowther and the Turkish Government were negotiating a treaty.]

No. 350.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. 35187/31738/08/44.

(No. 281.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 9, 1908.

Count Metternich came to see me to-day⁽¹⁾ and, in reply to my question, told me it was the view of the German Government that, if possible, the trouble in the Near East should go no further, and that support and encouragement should be given to the new régime at Constantinople.

I said I agreed entirely with this view. But the manner in which Bulgaria had declared her independence and Austria had arbitrarily altered the Treaty of Berlin was a great shock. It was no good having any Treaties at all, if they were to be altered in this way. The effect must be damaging to Turkey, for it amounted to a public insult.

Count Metternich said that, no doubt, Turkey had been affected from the sentimental point of view, but she had not been actually weakened. It was not as if she had lost Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bulgaria: they had been practically gone before, and there was no material loss to her.

I pointed out that there had at least been a tribute from Eastern Roumelia.

Count Metternich replied that it had been irregularly paid, and the tribute from Bulgaria had not been paid at all.

I reminded him that, at any rate, Turkey had had a legal claim to some tribute, and one could hardly say that there was no material loss to her in the sweeping away for ever of this claim without compensation.

Count Metternich said that Austria had given no warning to Germany, who had been just as surprised by what had taken place as the other Powers had been. But, though Germany wished, as he had said, to encourage the new régime in Turkey, she would feel bound in this matter to support her ally and friend.

I told him I understood this perfectly; but I was surprised that Austria had given no warning to Germany, who was her ally. In our own case, if an ally of ours had taken on her own account action likely to lead to trouble and to need support, I should be inclined to tell her that as she had taken action without consulting us she must not count on our support.

Count Metternich said he thought Austria would not accept a Conference to which the question of Bosnia was to be submitted.

⁽¹⁾ [*G.P.* XXVI, I, pp. 109, 122-4. Paragraph 7, beginning "Count Metternich said that Austria" is quoted in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 190-1.]

I asked him whether, if this proved to be the case, Austria would admit the right of other Powers to alter Articles of the Treaty of Berlin at will without having a Conference.

Count Metternich said he was sure Austria desired peace.

I told him no doubt this was so. Most countries wished to get all they desired without having the trouble of going to war; but an attempt of this kind was often the cause of war, however little it might be desired. In this case the consequences seemed to be spreading: Montenegro and Crete had now taken matters into their own hands, and all countries seemed to think they might now act as they pleased.

Count Metternich asked me whether I had any confirmation of trouble in Albania. That, he thought, would be more serious than anything else.

I replied that I had no news of trouble in Albania. I repeated that I sympathised with the German desire not to see the trouble spread, and to support and encourage the new régime in Turkey; but I had no suggestion to make at the moment as to what steps could be taken, and I should be interested to hear whether the German Government could suggest anything.

[I am, &c.]

F. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 351.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 35188/31738/08/44.

(No. 110.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 9, 1908.

Count Mensdorff asked me to-day whether I had read the Austrian communication.⁽¹⁾

I told him I had done so, and he then explained, in answer to my criticisms, that the Servians had been carrying on a serious agitation in Bosnia; it had been difficult for the Austrians to combat this without annexation, because various difficulties arose in connection with such things as high treason. Austria had given compensation to Turkey with regard to the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar: a compensation to which, Count Mensdorff thought, sufficient importance had not been attached. The matter was one between Austria and Turkey, for it was really a Treaty between Austria and Turkey which had been denounced.

I said that in our view it was a violation of the Treaty of Berlin. Under that Treaty, Austria was given indefinite occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the status of the Provinces remained Turkish. It was an exceedingly bad precedent to attempt to alter a Treaty arbitrarily at the will of one party to it. At the Conference in London in 1871, in an Article which Austria had signed, it had been laid down that international Treaties were not to be altered in this way. What Austria had done had given a great blow to public confidence, and it was in the interests of public morality that we should not recognise her action. Count Mensdorff had said that Austria was anxious to support the new régime in Turkey; but, even if the matter had been one between Turkey and Austria alone, and however fair the bargain might be on its merits, it was nevertheless flouting and insulting the new régime in Turkey to withdraw from one part of Turkish territory and alter the status of another without previous agreement and without even a word in advance to the Turkish Government.

Count Mensdorff told me he thought that his Government would not agree to the question of Bosnia being submitted to any Conference.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 405-7, No. 330, *encl.*]

I replied that, if so, it followed that any Power would have the right to take any Article in the Treaty of Berlin to which it objected, to declare it abrogated, and to deny the right of the other Powers to have any say in the matter at all.

The actions of Austria and Bulgaria, which seemed to have been connected, had raised all sorts of consequences which seemed to be getting more serious every day. The Austrian action, following as it had done immediately upon the shock given by Bulgaria's violation of the Treaty of Berlin, seemed to me most inopportune and unfortunate.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 352.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35197/31738/08/44A.

Paris, D. October 10, 1908, 11.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 68.)

R. October 11, 1908, 7 A.M.

Near East.

I informed M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] this afternoon that Russian Acting Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] has suggested that declaration made by Russia, France and England to the Porte that the Treaty of Berlin cannot be modified without an Agreement with the Signatory Powers shall be likewise made to the Bulgarian and Servian Gov[ernmen]ts and that Italy should be invited to join such declarations and that you think that if such declarations are to be made at Sofia and Belgrade a like one should be made at Vienna.

Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] will join in all three such declarations if H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] and the Russian Gov[ernmen]t particularly desire to make them.

He concurs with you that if made at Sofia and Belgrade it ought in principle to be made at Vienna also. He says, however, that the French Agent at Sofia reports that he and the British and Russian Agents are agreed that such a declaration may cause Prince Ferdinand to precipitate matters and do more harm than good; M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] moreover is inclined to deprecate such a declaration at Vienna as being likely to cause great irritation without producing any effect. If H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] and the Russian Gov[ernmen]t are still anxious to make the declaration at Sofia and at Belgrade, the reason for not making a like one at Vienna might be that Bulgaria and Servia were menacing in their attitude and Austria Hungary was not.

No. 353.

Communication from Servian Legation, October 10, 1908.

F.O. 35696/37138/08/44.

Légation Royale de Serbie.

Le Gouvernement Royal, en réponse aux représentations du Gouvernement austro-hongrois au sujet de la mobilisation de l'armée serbe, a déclaré qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'une mobilisation du premier ban tout entier de la réserve; qu'environ vingt-mille réservistes se rendront dans les casernes, et que dans le pays tout entier il y aura sous les drapeaux de trente-cinq à quarante mille hommes. C'est là une

mesure de précaution élémentaire, considérant l'excitation qui règne dans le pays et la situation troublée actuelle dans les Balkans. Le Gouvernement Serbe n'a aucune intention agressive ni contre l'Autriche ni contre aucun autre pays voisin.

Il attend, confiant dans la justice de sa cause, la réunion de la conférence des Grandes Puissances.

Le 10 octobre, 1908.

No. 354.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Egerton.

F.O. 35472/31738/08/44.

(No. 134.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 10, 1908.

The Italian Ambassador came to see me to-day and told me that his Government entirely agreed with us that no Power can be admitted to have the right of modifying an international Treaty without the consent of the co-signatory Powers. He also told me that his Government thought a Conference would be the best solution to the present difficulty. His Government wished to know whether we were ready to accept the idea of a Conference as a means of ratifying the recent action of Bulgaria and of Austria-Hungary; and, if so, what would be the conditions we should like to attach to such a ratification. Italy would consider it a necessary concession on the part of Austria-Hungary that she should renounce Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin as well as Article 25.

I replied that I very much welcomed the expression of opinion, with which we were entirely in accord, contained in the first part of what the Ambassador had said.

As to a Conference, there was a great difference between a Conference which was limited to the two points of Bosnia and Bulgaria and a Conference which was unlimited. What Turkey had desired was a strictly limited Conference. I did not yet know what M. Iswolsky's view was, and I wished to see him before I gave an answer about a Conference. I might say, however, that in any case, before any Conference was agreed to, we should like to have some clear idea of how the interests of Turkey were to be compensated, supposing that she was to be asked to recognise what had been done. The successive events which had taken place recently were a severe blow to the prestige of the new régime. If the new régime was overthrown, there would be chaos and confusion throughout the whole of the Turkish Empire, and such trouble as Europe had not known for a long time.

I told the Ambassador that we were joining with Russia and France in expressing at Constantinople the view which he had just communicated to me on behalf of the Italian Government: that the Treaty of Berlin could not be modified without the consent of the Signatory Powers; and he promised to enquire whether Italy would join in the representation at Constantinople.

I also told the Ambassador that we could not allow the union of Crete to Greece, as it would be a distinct breach of the obligation which the four Powers had undertaken with regard to Turkey when they occupied the island: this was an obligation apart altogether from the Treaty of Berlin.

With regard to any promise about Article 29, I could not give an answer yet. In my own opinion, it was not a thing about which we should make any difficulty. But I could not promise to recognise any alteration of the Treaty of Berlin till we knew how a settlement satisfactory to Turkey could be arrived at.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. 35411/31738/08/44.

(No. 282.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 10, 1908.

The German Ambassador came to inform me to-day⁽¹⁾ that his Government would be very willing to support anything in the nature of an indemnity to Turkey or anything which would strengthen her position. He referred especially to the two matters I had mentioned yesterday: the loss of the Roumelian Tribute, and the Railway.

I reminded the Ambassador that I had not made any suggestion; I had referred to these matters in commenting upon a statement of his that Turkey had not suffered any material loss, and I had said that I should be very interested to hear if the German Government could make any suggestions.

Count Metternich said his Government were very ready to consider anything which would reassure Turkey. He mentioned, not as a proposal, but as an idea, the possibility of guaranteeing the remaining European possessions of Turkey, such as Macedonia: though of course it might be that Turkey would consider such an idea as slighting to her prestige.

I remarked that one had to be very careful in proposing remedies for a situation such as this, not to put forward anything which might raise still further questions. I would gladly bear in mind what he had told me about the views of his Government. Much would of course depend upon the views of the Russian Government, which I should not know until I had seen M. Iswolsky.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXVI, I, p. 144.*]

No. 356.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 35696/31738/08/44.

(No. 50.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 10, 1908.

The Servian Chargé d'Affaires called this morning and handed to Sir Charles Hardinge the telegram of which a copy is enclosed,⁽¹⁾ explaining the mobilisation measures taken by the Servian Gov[ernmen]t, and affirming that they have no aggressive intentions against Austria-Hungary or any other neighbouring country.

M. Grouitch referred to his conversation at the F[oreign] O[ffice] of the 8th inst[ant] and to the inquiry then put to him what compensation the Servian Gov[ernmen]t expected for the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary. He made, as personal ideas, the two following suggestions:—

1. The grant of a concession for a railway to the Adriatic such as his Gov[ernmen]t had already applied for to the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t and
2. A rectification of the Servian frontier on the side of Bosnia.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 421–2, No. 353.]

He was told that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had already expressed their readiness to support the proposal for a railway to the Adriatic and that there seemed to be no reason why they sh[oul]d change their attitude. As regards the second suggestion it might be difficult to induce the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] to abandon territory which they had already annexed.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 357.

Consul-General Eyres to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 371/231.

(No. 5.) Commercial.

Constantinople. D. October 10, 1908.

Sir,

R. October 14, 1908.

I have the honour to report that, as a result of the strong feeling aroused here by the Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzo[e]govina, the Young Turks have proclaimed a boycott of Austrian goods.

Placards have been posted calling on all patriots to abstain from buying Austrian goods, and the newspapers are publishing articles to the same effect.

To-day crowds outside the principal Austrian shops are impeding access, and I hear that the Austrian Lloyd steamers are carrying no native passengers.

I have, &c.

H. C. A. EYRES.

No. 358.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 35468/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 12, 1908.

Tel. (No. 484.)

D. 6.45 P.M.

Iswolsky has proposed a limited programme for a Conference to which we can agree if it proves acceptable to Turkey and the other Powers.⁽¹⁾

He proposes that question of Straits should not be in programme of Conference, but discussed in first instance between Turkey and Russia and that any change should thus be dependent upon consent of Turkey. But he wishes us to promise not to oppose an arrangement by which Russia and Black sea States should have exclusive right to send warships through Straits, limited to three ships at a time and without right of stopping or anchoring. I fear public opinion here is not prepared for so one-sided an arrangement and will expect reciprocal rights at any rate in time of war. Otherwise cruisers from Black Sea could harry commerce in Mediterranean, could take refuge in Straits or Black Sea and could not be followed. We also feel that to raise question now is inopportune and will expose Russia here to the charge of having made a deal with Austria and taken advantage of the situation. The line which Russian officials have taken in Persia is also unpopular; if there were a genuine belief here that she was cordially favourable to the new regime in Turkey, things would be easier, but she could best create this opinion by cooperating in settlement of present crisis in Near East in a sense favourable to Turkey without making any advantage for herself. Though Government here is quite disposed to opening of Straits on safe terms we see great difficulty in getting a one sided arrangement accepted here at present time. Have you any more information as to feeling in St. Petersburg?

Repeat to Constantinople (No. 337), October 12, 1908.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 427-8, No. 363.]

No. 359.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 35197/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 488.)

Foreign Office, October 12, 1908.[Repeats Telegram from Sir F. Bertie No. 68 of October 10, 1908.](¹)

Inform the Russian Gov[ernmen]t that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] agree with the French Gov[ernmen]t in thinking that in present circumstances, it would be better to abstain from any further representation.(²)

Repeated to Sofia, Constantinople, Vienna, Belgrade.

(¹) [*c. supra*, p. 421, No. 352.]

(²) [Agreed to by Russian Government. Sir A. Nicolson to Sir E. Grey, Tel. No. 200 of October 13, 1908.]

No. 360.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 35412/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 335.)

Foreign Office, October 12, 1908.

We are at present engaged in considering how in any international settlement which ratifies the changes made in the treaty of Berlin by recognizing Austrian and Bulgarian action, compensation could be found for Turkey, and we have reason to suppose that the majority of the Powers will approach the problem from this point of view. Meanwhile would it be acceptable and of use to the new regime if the Powers were to enable Turkey by their guarantee to raise a loan for purposes of immediate necessities and future development of the country. It seems to us that such a step being evidence of goodwill to Turkey might help to consolidate the young Turkish party and restore confidence and tranquillity generally, but I cannot say whether it is feasible without knowing whether it would in principle be agreeable to Turkey. Please ascertain privately the views of Turkish Gov[ernmen]t and inform them of this view of situation.

No. 361.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 35468/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 339.)

Foreign Office, October 12, 1908.

D. 7 P.M.

I have told Turkish Ambassador that we think programme proposed by M. Isvolsky here for the Conference may be accepted. It includes no mention of the Straits. Ambassador says Turkish Gov[ernmen]t know of the programme and might take it into consideration if agreed to by us, France and Russia. I have told him that while not opposing in principle opening of the Straits for Russia, we are not satisfied yet that there is any proposal to which we can agree and that in any case we should make agreement to any proposal conditional upon its being voluntarily accepted by Turkey on terms satisfactory to her. Ambassador says that Turkey would much prefer not to have the question touched.

Repeat to St. Petersburg (No. 485), October 12, 1908.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35514/31738/08/44.

Therapia, D. October 12, 1908, 10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 317.)

R. October 13, 1908, 7 A.M.

Instructions are being sent to Turkish Ambassador in London to confidentially give you views of Turkish Government with reference to submitting questions at issue to a Conference and to ascertain yours.

1. Bosnia. Turkish Gov[ernmen]t suggest matter should remain as it is with their protest thus avoiding the present position of Austria-Hungary with regard to Provinces being legalised by the Powers. Matter need therefore not be considered by a conference.

2. Bulgaria. Turkish Gov[ernmen]t object to title of Czar of the Bulgarians which would inevitably give a handle to the ruler of Bulgaria to eventually assert authority over the Macedonian Bulgarians on whom the proclamation has already had some effect. While prepared that a Conference should recognise independence of Bulgaria they could not sign any protocol giving sovereign rights to Prince Ferdinand over Eastern Roumelia and they would be compelled (? to retain) their rights over that province and if necessary eventually to assert them by military action.

They are thoroughly convinced that if Eastern Roumelia ceases to be a sort of buffer state between Bulgaria and Turkey Bulgaria will inevitably have designs on Macedonia which would lead to a (? great) conflagration.

3. As regards Russian offers (see my Tel[egram] No. 304)(¹) Turkish Gov[ernmen]t see no reason to be tempted by them as Capitulations and Post Offices questions will naturally settle themselves in due course under a reformed Constitutional Gov[ernmen]t.

As regards No. 1 (? Turkish Gov[ernmen]t's) suggestion might perhaps meet Austrian difficulty (? of going to) a Conference and if Austria acted on the principle of the Treaty of Berlin of paying compensation for territory acquired, it would go far towards solution of this part of the present complications. As regards No. 2 title assumed by Prince Ferdinand is certainly open to objection and Turkey's fears as to the possible absorption of Macedonia are not in that (? group omitted respect) baseless.

As regards No. 3, there is every indication that Turkey would be opposed to the opening of the Straits to the Black Sea riverain States though perhaps they would not be so opposed to a general opening to all Powers Signatories of the Treaties concerning this question. But they would rather see question excluded from Conference.

(? Grand Vizier and) Turkish M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] requested that the above should be kept absolutely confidential.

MINUTES.

The idea of the Turks seems to be to leave Bulgaria as much as possible to aspire to in the future, rather than to satisfy her now; if she has E[astern] Roumelia in full possession now she will at once be hungering for Macedonia, therefore do not let her have E[astern] Roumelia yet.

This is obviously true and nothing can prevent Bulgaria hungering for Macedonia, whatever pledges she or anyone else may give on the subject. But it is equally certain I think that Bulgaria will fight for E[astern] Roumelia.

As to Prince Ferdinand's title the same argument applies, whatever his title is or is not to be Bulgarian aspirations regarding Macedonia and the feeling in Macedonia will be the same.

The Turkish view regarding the Capitulations and the Post Offices is very natural to them and I fear it might be the same as regards money compensation. They ought to recognize the value of these things but they will not; that is even if Kiamil and others do the people will not.

J. A. C. T.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 414, No. 338.]

If the Turks insist respecting Eastern Roumelia a peaceful solution will be impossible.

R. P. M.

See separate Minute.

L. M.

This has crossed our telegram of this morning⁽²⁾ and we have not had any answer to the loan suggestion. We could hardly have expected the Porte to have arrived unaided at the conclusion to which we have come, namely, acceptance of the situation created by Austria and Bulgaria, in return for the financial and moral support of the three Powers to the new régime.

In regard to 1). We might point out that although H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] fully enter into their feelings with regard to Bosnia, yet they cannot help thinking that it would be highly impolitic in present circumstances, to leave the question open, and that it would be more advantageous for Turkey to recognise the permanent character of the Austrian occupation in Bosnia and Herzegovina in return for the evacuation of Novi Bazar, which is, when all is said, solid gain. Such a course would conciliate a powerful neighbour, whose enmity might be a serious factor in future developments and it would strengthen the position of Turkey at the present moment. In this connection it must not be forgotten that Germany is the ally of Austria.

Perhaps the most serious advantage of submitting the question to the Conference would be that the evacuation of Novi-Bazar would be endorsed and ratified by the Powers.

It is moreover doubtful whether a Conference from which one of the two most important questions to be settled is excluded, would be worth holding.

As regard [sic] 2). The question of the Prince's title seems to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to be a matter of form, and it is not one on which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would recommend the Porte to be obstinate.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] submit that the Eastern Roumelian question is the most important of all, and they have given it their most careful consideration. They are convinced that Bulgaria would not yield on this point without fighting. It is a choice of evils, but is it prudent on the part of the Porte to risk the future of reform in Turkey for the sake of insisting on a claim which is mainly sentimental.

Let the Porte consider what happened in 1885, when E[astern] Roumelia declared for incorporation with Bulgaria. If the Porte took so serious a step, as war with Bulgaria on this account, could they count on the sympathy of all the European Powers, which would be essential if they were to prevail. In the opinion of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], the Porte would not suffer in prestige by accepting the present situation, and, it would be more to their advantage to accept material compensation in the form of the capitalisation of the E[astern] Roumelian tribute.

Y[our] E[xc]ellency should impress upon the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t that the real bulwark against further encroachments by Bulgaria is the establishment of good government in Macedonia which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are confident the reformed Turkish Gov[ernmen]t are able to accomplish. Let them remember the example of Japan and devote their energies to the reorganisation of all branches of the public service.

As regards 3). H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] share the views of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t that the question should not come before a Conference, and you may inform them that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t have decided not to do so.

L. M. Oct[ober] 13.

This is answered by my conversation with Turkish Ambassador which I am telegraphing.⁽³⁾

E. G.

(2) [*v. supra*, p. 425, No. 360.]

(3) [*v. infra*, p. 433, No. 370.]

No. 363.

Memorandum communicated by M. Isvolski, October 12, 1908.

F.O. 35468/31738/08/44.

October 12, 1908.

Les points suivants pourraient être adoptés par les Puissances comme devant faire l'objet des travaux de la Conférence.

1. Bulgarie, son statut juridique et ses obligations financières à l'égard de la Turquie.
2. Bosnie et Herzégovine.
3. Sandjak de Novi Bazar.
4. Stipulations de l'Article 23 du Traité de Berlin concernant les provinces de la Turquie d'Europe.
5. Article 61 concernant les provinces habitées par les Arméniens.
6. Stipulations de l'Article 29 limitant les droits souverains du Monténégro.

7. Rectifications de frontières en faveur de la Serbie et du Monténégro sur la partie du territoire Bosno-Herzégovien qui avoisine le Sandjak de Novi-Bazar.⁽¹⁾

8. Droits des États Balcaniques en tant que riverains du Danube.

9. Questions des capitulations et des bureaux de postes étrangers en Turquie.

P.S.—La question de la Crète comme étant plus directement du ressort des Quatre Puissances Protectrices, ces dernières l'examineront de concert avec la Turquie et en référeront à la Conférence.

Enclosure in No. 363.

Mémoire explicatif.

ad No. 1.—ARTICLE 1 à 22 (Bulgarie) doivent être remplacés par des stipulations qui établissent la reconnaissance de la Bulgarie comme Royaume indépendant et déterminent ses obligations financières à l'égard de la Turquie.

Un article spécial pourrait régler la question du chemin de fer surgie dernièrement.

ad NN. 4 et P.S.—(A l'ARTICLE 23 (Crète et Macédoine) devrait être substituée la reconnaissance de l'annexion de la Crète à la Grèce et éventuellement le règlement des obligations financières incombant de ce chef à cette dernière.)⁽²⁾

Il y aurait lieu en outre de faire un article exprimant à peu près l'idée suivante :

“Sa Majesté le Sultan ayant institué spontanément dans Son Empire un régime constitutionnel qui établit une égalité parfaite de droits pour tous les sujets Ottomans sans distinction de race et de religion, les stipulations prévues par l'article 23 du traité de Berlin pour les provinces de la Turquie d'Europe deviendront sans objet, dès que les Puissances se seront assurées que des règlements satisfaisant à cette égalité, ont été edictés et effectivement appliqués.”

ad No. 2.—L'ARTICLE 25 (Bosnie et Herzégovine) serait remplacé par un article stipulant l'annexion de la Bosnie et de la Herzégovine à l'Autriche-Hongrie et la reprise par le Gouvernement Ott[om]an de la plénitude de son autorité sur le sandjak de Novi-Bazar.

ad No. 6.—Les ARTICLES 26 à 33 (Monténégro) devraient être fondus en un seul, établissant que la Principauté, dans les limites qui lui ont été assignées par le Traité de Berlin, étant un état entièrement indépendant, toutes les restrictions imposées par l'Article 29 au libre exercice de sa souveraineté sont et demeurent abrogées.

ad No. 8.—Pour les ARTICLES 43 à 57 (Roumanie et Danube) il y aurait lieu de s'entendre sur la révision du règlement du Danube, actuellement en vigueur, en accordant des droits plus considérables aux états riverains.

ad No. 5.—L'ARTICLE 61 (Arménie) devrait être modifié comme il est dit ci-dessus pour la deuxième partie de l'article 23.

ad No. 7.—Il y aurait lieu de rechercher une compensation pour la Serbie : elle pourrait consister dans une rectification de frontière sur la partie du territoire Bosno-Herzégovien avoisinant le Sandjak de Novi-Bazar ; une rectification analogue de frontière pourrait être aussi accordée au Monténégro.

ad No. 10 [9].—Une déclaration spéciale pourrait porter que, la nouvelle Constitution Ottomane prévoyant la réorganisation de la justice et la refonte de la législation en Turquie dans un sens conforme aux principes appliqués dans les autres états de l'Europe, les Puissances sont prêtes à étudier, de concert avec le Gouvernement Ottoman, dès qu'il aura réalisé ces réformes, le moyen de substituer au régime des anciennes capitulations des traités à terme, analogues à ceux qui régissent les rapports des Puissances modernes. Il y aurait lieu aussi d'étudier la possibilité d'abolir les postes étrangères fonctionnant en Turquie.

⁽¹⁾ [As the result of consultation between Sir E. Grey, M. Isvolski, and M. Paul Cambon, the wording of item 7 was changed to “Avantages à procurer à la Serbie et au Monténégro.” *v. infra*, p. 453, No. 390.]

⁽²⁾ [The paragraph enclosed in round brackets was withdrawn by M. Isvolski at the suggestion of Sir C. Hardinge and Sir E. Grey.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35646/31738/08/44.

(No. 317.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 12, 1908.

After the meeting of the Cabinet to-day I saw M. Iswolsky and told him that, though I wished to examine in the Department the details of his programme for a Conference, it had been generally approved by the Cabinet.

He then discussed what the next step should be. In his opinion it was very desirable that a Conference should be announced as soon as possible and, after considering various Capitals, he expressed a strong opinion in favour of Rome as the most suitable meeting place. He also asked me what was my view as to the way in which the invitations to the Conference should be issued; for instance, should Russia, France, and England jointly send them out.

I said I thought it would be very desirable to ascertain the views of Germany before issuing any invitations. Count Metternich had told me the desire of the German Government was to secure as fair terms as possible for Turkey, and to smooth things over. If we issued the invitations without consulting her, we might not have her good-will. So far as I could see, there was nothing in the programme to which Germany could object reasonably; and by first ascertaining whether the programme met with her acceptance we should prevent an apparent division of the Powers into two camps before the opening of the Conference.

M. Iswolsky dwelt upon the difficulty of getting Austria to accept the programme, as it included the discussion of the subject of Bosnia.

I suggested that as the German Government wished to smooth things over they would probably be able to arrange this.

It would be necessary to ascertain whether Turkey accepted the programme.

M. Iswolsky then asked me what I had to tell him about the Straits.

I told him frankly that the opinion of the Cabinet was that it would be very difficult, if not impossible, to get public opinion here to accept a one-sided arrangement about the Straits. At the time of the Anglo-Russian Convention we had contemplated that, in the course of time, confidence would grow up between England and Russia and make a favourable arrangement possible. But I found that, for instance, the action of Russian Officers in Persia in suppressing the Constitution had created an unfavourable effect on public opinion here. I heard to-day that Russian Officers were being sent with Cossack troops to put down the Nationalists at Tabriz: this again would make an unfavourable impression. People here would be still further unfavourably impressed if Russia sought advantages to herself from the present crisis in the Near East. If we came to a one-sided arrangement, which people here would argue necessitated an increase of our Naval Force in the Mediterranean, and if we altered an international Treaty very greatly to the advantage of Russia, and to what would be considered our disadvantage, without getting anything in return,—we should be making a concession which it would be very difficult to defend here at this moment.

I therefore thought the time was very inopportune.

M. Iswolsky dwelt upon the entire change of Russian feeling towards Turkey. Russia now desired to support Turkey as a barrier against the Austrian advance.

I suggested that Russia might demonstrate her good-will to Turkey by working for such a settlement of the present crisis as would safeguard Turkish interests without any direct advantage to Russia herself: that would create a very good impression here.

As a detail, I pointed out the disadvantage it would be to us if in time of war, when Turkey was at peace, one or two cruisers could come out through the Straits and harry British Commerce without our being able to pursue them back into the Black Sea.

⁽¹⁾ [Printed in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 180-2. A telegram of the same date, not reproduced here, is paraphrased *ib.* pp. 179-80. The despatch here given is fuller.]

M. Iswolsky again dwelt with emphasis upon the unfortunate consequences which must follow if, once more, when there was an opportunity for settling the question of the Straits in favour of Russia, England opposed, and this time her opposition alone prevented a settlement.

I could only repeat that I saw great difficulties in any arrangement which was not reciprocal.

M. Iswolsky asked me what he was to telegraph to St. Petersburg: was he to telegraph a refusal?

I told him I had explained the difficulties which the Government felt in their way. We had had only a very short time to consider the matter, and I suggested that he should turn over those difficulties in his own mind before we considered the subject as closed.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 365.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35421/31738/08/44A.

(No. 398.)

Sir,

Paris, D. October 12, 1908.

R. October 13, 1908.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a leading article from the "Temps" of to-day's date on the question of the Straits. A short history is given of the question, and of the controversies between England and Russia in regard thereto. In 1907 England thought it well to bring to an end the old quarrel "between the elephant and the whale" and she must now admit that the present state of the Straits question is vexatious and intolerable for Russia. If English interests were compatible with the conclusion of the Anglo-Russian *Entente*, they should be compatible with an alteration of the régime affecting the Straits, and the article asserts that Turkish interests need not suffer by the change. What serious reasons can therefore be invoked against Russia's desire? The basis of a new arrangement would seem to be afforded by the Convention of Constantinople relative to the Suez Canal of October 29, 1888; which provides for a free passage even for belligerents on the condition that they make no stay in the canal; that they commit no warlike acts and that they take in only a minimum of coal.

The article states in conclusion that there is no reason to be unduly attached to obsolete, contradictory, hypocritical and ineffectual Treaties but that the procedure in altering them must be a legal and correct one. In the case in point, a new agreement seems called for, one which would be of a less vexatious nature and which would hold out a prospect of an improved state of things in the future.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

Enclosure in No. 365.

Extract from the "Temps" of October 12, 1908.

[Only the last two paragraphs are here quoted.]

Mais il y a la Turquie, qu'on se donne mission de protéger et qui demande à être protégée. Nous comprenons fort bien les raisons d'apparence qui, actuellement, rendent pénibles aux Turcs les modifications qu'envisage la Russie. Mais au fond les Turcs ne savent-ils pas que tous les traités relatifs aux Détroits n'ont fait qu'enregistrer leur asservissement alternatif et que ce n'est pas pour eux, mais contre eux que telle puissance, un jour, et un autre jour telle autre ont élaboré ces stipulations? Se croient-ils vraiment protégés par cet arsenal de textes? N'admettent-ils pas qu'on pourrait concevoir un autre régime plus sincère et tout aussi sûr

qui les garantirait mieux contre le risque d'être impliqués dans les querelles des tiers? Ne faut-il pas tenir compte aussi du fait qu'il y a maintenant dans la mer Noire une marine roumaine, une marine bulgare, et virtuellement, par le Danube libre, une marine autrichienne? Ne peut-on pas souhaiter une réglementation nouvelle qui concilie les intérêts de tous, sans péril et sans humiliation pour la Turquie?

Puisque la Russie aspire à cette réglementation, quelles raisons sérieuses y a-t-il de la lui refuser? Les bases en sont fournies, semble-t-il, par la convention de Constantinople relative au canal de Suez du 29 octobre, 1888. Passage libre même pour les belligérants, à condition qu'ils ne séjournent pas dans le canal; qu'ils n'y fassent pas d'actes de guerre; qu'il n'y embarquent qu'un minimum de charbon: tels sont les principes de cette convention qu'on peut sans difficulté appliquer aux Détroits. Actuellement, les traités antérieurs n'assurent aux Turcs, pour le cas où ils seraient en guerre, aucune garantie réelle. Ils les exposent à pâtir du contre-coup de luttes où ils ne participent pas. Ils imposent d'autre part aux Russes et aux autres riverains de la mer Noire une gêne des plus graves. A condition qu'on procède légalement et correctement, nous avouons, quant à nous, n'avoir aucune tendresse pour des traités obsolètes, contradictoires, hypocrites et inefficaces. Un nouvel accord, plus sincère et moins vexatoire, nous semblerait le gage désirable d'un avenir meilleur.

No. 366.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, October 13, 1908.

F.O. 35532/31738/08/44A.

D. 4.22 P.M.

Tel. (No. 198.)

R. 5.40 P.M.

Your telegram No. 484.⁽¹⁾

It is most difficult to ascertain what is public opinion here. Outside public opinion is, I should say, in line with that of the press in strongly condemning action of Austria-Hungary, and in considering Slav interests have thereby been seriously injured. Feeling is strong on this point. As to a Conference or its programme, I should doubt if the man in the street had any opinion or cared about it.

Press, with one or two exceptions, consider that a Conference is perhaps the only solution of difficulty, though it is not popular, and although press in general has considerably veered round to the view that Russia should in the Conference ask for no compensation for herself, it considers that she should warmly support and safeguard Slav interests. This is vague, and no indication is given as to the manner in which Russia is to achieve this. There is, further, in some journals an opinion that Dardanelles question is not of great importance, and might be settled apart from Conference.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs is pretty generally attacked all along line for not having opposed more firmly intentions of Austria, for having admitted Russia would be satisfied with compensation, and for having made no reserves or conditions as to general Slav interests.

I think that, if Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs holds over Dardanelles question, there would be no outcry in the press here, but, in that case, he would, I think, in order to conciliate press opinion, have to show that Serbia and Montenegro would receive some satisfaction, or, in any case, that their interests would be favourably considered at the Conference. As regards Serbia, even supposing that she keeps quiet, this would seem to be difficult. If a solution of present difficulty could have been thought out without having recourse to Conference, I think this would not have been unwelcome here. Press opinion has little confidence in Russian diplomacy, and fears Russia may play a poor part in a Conference.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 424, No. 358.]

No. 367.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, October 13, 1908.

D. 6.45 P.M.

R. 8.15 P.M.

F.O. 35545/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 54.)

Eastern crisis.

German Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks, from information which has reached him both from Vienna and Constantinople, that there is some prospect of an arrangement being come to between Austria and Turkey which would be the most satisfactory solution of the present difficulty. He has no definite information about the negotiations for a Conference, but believes that the views of the German Government coincide exactly with those of His Majesty's Government, viz., that the subjects of discussion should be strictly limited, and that compensation should be given to the Turks perhaps by means of a territorial guarantee.

No. 368.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, October 13, 1908.

D. 7.55 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

F.O. 35549/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 70.) Secret.

Minister for Foreign Affairs informed me in confidence to-day that when M. Isvolsky read to him the Memorandum on the question of Straits, which had been drawn up by the Russian Ambassador here on instructions from St. Petersburg, he expressed no opinion on it, and so informed French Ambassador in London for his guidance. Minister for Foreign Affairs could not, however, suppose that His Majesty's Government would adopt, or Turkey accept, the proposals as they stood, but it was not for the French Government to point out to the Russian Government the objections to them. He hoped, however, that an arrangement would be come to between the three parties chiefly interested acceptable to the other Powers, for if M. Isvolsky failed in his mission he might fall, which, in the present circumstances, would be very unfortunate.

No. 369.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 13, 1908.

D. 8.30 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

F.O. 35543/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 51.) R.

Near East.

Following official communiqués appeared in evening papers to-night:—

“1. In contradiction of recurring statements in foreign press that no Power had been told beforehand of the annexation, we are in a position to state that at Buchlau and Salzburg, Russia and Italy were informed of (?) projected annexation, and raised no objection to it.

“2. Austria-Hungary has as yet received no proposal with regard to a Conference. Should a Conference take place, and should it in conformity with Austria-Hungary's well-known standpoint be confined to sanctioning the annexation without discussing it, its acceptance in principle by Austria-Hungary

may be anticipated. Nothing is officially known here as to other subjects which may form part of the programme of Conference, but in any case one may gather from the notoriously excellent relations which exist between the Monarchy and Russia that any proposals coming from the latter Power will be met with favourable consideration on the part of Austria-Hungary."

No. 370.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 35514/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 348.) Very Confidential.

Foreign Office, October 13, 1908.

Your telegram No. 317.⁽¹⁾

Turkish Ambassador has asked my opinion confidentially as to Turkish view about Eastern Roumelia. I have replied that my first impression is that the Powers having recognized union for practical purposes of Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia in 1885 would regard attempt to establish a difference between them now as undoing not what was done a fortnight ago but what was done in 1885.

It would also complicate the question of indemnity which Bulgaria should be induced to pay. Distinction between Bulgaria and Eastern Roumelia would be matter of form, which would not in practice affect Bulgarian policy respecting Macedonia. I agreed that consequences feared by Turks as to Macedonia would lead to conflagration, but urged that true safeguard was good Government and a strong Turkish Army. Turkey had better secure largest possible pecuniary compensation from Bulgaria, use it to strengthen her own resources and not regard points of form.

As to Bosnia, I replied that I heard that Austria was likely to refuse to submit it to Conference. If this difficulty could be overcome I thought Turkey would be well advised to let this question go to the Conference in order to get renunciation of Austrian rights in Novi Bazar countersigned by the Powers. Otherwise Austria might some day resume them.

Ambassador urged strongly that question of Straits should not be raised. I have told him it is not to be in programme of Conference; that I feel it is inopportune and have not yet settled anything; that under no circumstances must pressure be applied to Turkey and that I will let him know what position of question is, when M. Isvolsky leaves London.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 426, No. 362.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXVI, I, p. 178.*]

No. 371.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35990/31738/08/44.

(No. 324.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 13, 1908.

Late in the evening of the 12th, I had some further conversation with Monsieur Isvolsky about the question of the Dardanelles.⁽²⁾

He told me that the point I had put to him, as to Russian cruisers being able to come out through the Straits into the Mediterranean in time of war and being able to retire again into the Straits free from pursuit, had not occurred to him. He thought it might be met by a provision that in time of war, when Turkey was

⁽¹⁾ [Printed in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 182-3.]

⁽²⁾ [For Count Metternich's report on M. Isvolski, *v. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 147-9, 154-5, 157-9.*]

neutral, she should observe her neutrality by giving equal facilities for passage through the Straits to all the belligerents.

I impressed upon him very strongly that I had no wish to send him away with the idea that we could not entertain any proposal about the Straits.

Monsieur Isvolsky observed that the French press were entirely on the side of opening the Straits.

I told him I had not given him the negative answer which he had deprecated. On the other hand, it was very difficult to give a positive answer, such as he had asked, for the reasons I had stated in the afternoon. The Cabinet felt that the time was exceedingly inopportune, and that they could not get public opinion here to accept at this moment a one-sided arrangement. I could satisfy the French press any day, by saying that we entirely agreed with their view: which was that the Straits should be open on the same terms for all. But I should not help matters between Russia and us by so doing, for this view was one which was disliked by Russia.

I again impressed on Monsieur Isvolsky the advantage of settling the present crisis in the Near East satisfactorily without seeking advantages for Russia or England.

I admitted that the proposal he had made as to equality in time of war did introduce an element of reciprocity, which had not been before the Cabinet and which I would submit to them.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 639–40, quotes the reply of King Edward to the Cabinet on the 13th in which he advocated giving way on the Straits question to Russia. For a Russian plan in 1896 with reference to the Straits, *v. Mémoires du Comte Witte*, Paris (1921), pp. 164–7.]

No. 372.

Sir G. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson:—

Foreign Office, October 13, 1908.

I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 8th.

I may as well give you a short resumé of what has taken place here since Isvolsky's arrival. At his first interview with Grey and me, he produced the programme for a Conference. We are examining the points suggested by him. We see no particular objection to any of them so far, and we have accepted the idea of a Conference in principle. He then raised the question of the Straits. You know the nature of his proposal, so it is unnecessary for me to repeat it. At the same time he made a very earnest personal appeal on account of his critical position in Russia owing to recent developments and the probability that, unless he were able to bring back something to Russia as a peace-offering to his enemies and those who were attacking him, his fall would be a practical certainty, and that of Stolypin also. He said that they would be replaced by reactionaries, who were very powerful at Court, and that there would be serious danger for the Anglo-Russian Convention, and for friendly relations between England and Russia.

There may be some truth in all this, but I think that, at the bottom of it all, is the very strong desire to be able to show the world that he has not been entirely duped by Aehrenthal. Although I think that he is greatly responsible for the developments in the Balkans, because he did not reject irrevocably Aehrenthal's advances, yet it is evident that we must do our best to support him, such as he is.

(1) [Carnock MSS.]

Yesterday morning there was a Cabinet Council. The Cabinet adopted the proposals of the Peace Conference, and also the suggestion of guaranteeing a loan to Turkey, if other Powers did the same and if the Turks required it, and they gave Grey a free hand to settle these matters. When Grey put before them the question of the Straits, although he and the Prime Minister were in favour of its adoption, the rest of the Cabinet opposed it strongly, saying the country would not understand anything which had not some sort of reciprocity. The point was raised that Russian cruisers would, in time of war, be able to sally forth through the Dardanelles, harass British commerce, and then, when pursued by British cruisers, obtain safety the moment they got inside the Dardanelles.

Isvolsky came down yesterday afternoon, and received this verdict with great dejection. He went away thoroughly miserable.

Last night there was a dinner at Grey's private house, at which Isvolsky, Benckendorff and Morley were present. The question of the Straits was reopened, and Isvolsky this time made a new proposal. He suggested that, in times of peace, the ingress and egress of the Straits should be open to the warships of the riverain Powers of the Black Sea under certain conditions, but that Turkey should make a declaration that, in time of war between Russia and any other Power, the same rights should be given to both belligerent Powers. He explained that it would be impossible to admit ships into the Black Sea in times of peace, since they might, with the connivance of Turkey, establish a naval station there. As this proposal contains an element of reciprocity, I think it is quite likely that the Cabinet will accept it. Grey is going to put the matter before the Cabinet to-morrow morning in a memorandum which he hopes to be able to give to Isvolsky to take away with him. From a strategical point of view, there is no possible advantage in our ships being able to go into the Black Sea in time of war. It is already a settled principle of naval warfare with us that in no case would our fleets enter the Straits, unless Turkey were our ally. The condition of reciprocity, however, is a shop-window ware, since the public do not understand these strategical considerations. I should be glad if this could be settled satisfactorily to-morrow, as it would save Isvolsky's position, and possibly also our entente. He should also be grateful to us for the support we should give him, especially as we shall not ask for any compensation from Russia such as he, in his memorandum of last year, agreed should be given.

Grey and Morley had a tremendous discussion with him last night on the subject of the action of the Russian Cossack Officers in Persia. Our Parliamentary view was explained to him very clearly, and how their action was regarded as direct intervention. Isvolsky said that he would be very pleased if he could get the Officers' action limited to that of instruction only, but I imagine that in this he would meet with obstruction at the Ministry of War at St. Petersburg. Grey told him of the instructions he sent to you yesterday. He himself said that he had telegraphed on the day before to Petersburg about it, and I therefore hope that the Officers who have been despatched to Tabriz will be either recalled or instructed that they are to disappear from their troops if any action is taken.

Isvolsky was very satisfactory about Afghanistan. He at once volunteered the suggestion that the Treaty should be regarded as binding, and should be executed as such, even without the consent of the Ameer. In the meantime we shall go on pressing the Ameer to give his consent, so as to put the Afghan part of the Convention on an absolutely legal basis.

I do not like Tcharykoff's new proposal about the Jamsheedis. We will send it over to the India Office, but I am quite convinced that they will have nothing to say to it. My idea is that we could give the Ameer an additional warning that his assurances must be completely fulfilled, and that after that we should intervene in this matter no more.

You have never seen such a woebegone appearance as Mensdorff has now. He thoroughly realizes that his Government have behaved in a very underhand manner, and the poor little man has had this well rubbed into him during his stay at Balmoral.

I really feel quite sorry for him. He is not a fitting representative of a policy of duplicity such as Aehrenthal's.

We are dreadfully busy, and I have no time for more to-day.

Y[ou]rs ever,
CHARLES HARDINGE

No. 373.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. 35647/31738/08/44.

(No. 285.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 13, 1908.

I told Count Metternich to-day that the suggestion of a Conference had been discussed with M. Iswolsky here.⁽¹⁾

I did not see how we could possibly recognise what Austria and Bulgaria had done, however impossible it was to undo it, unless it was recognised in proper form by the Powers who were parties to the Treaty of Berlin. The difficulty was to find terms on which Turkey, as one of those Powers, would feel that she could recognise the action of Austria and Bulgaria.

Our present ideas were that Turkey must have proper financial provision made by Bulgaria in return for the recognition of independence. Further, Turkey should be promised that when she had established constitutional Government and satisfactorily applied the principle of equality and modern methods of administration this would be regarded as satisfying the provisions of Article 23 and Article 61 of the Treaty of Berlin, which would then be revised in her favour. A conditional promise of the same kind might also be made that the place of the Capitulations should be taken by modern Treaties, as between other States.

I could not say whether Turkey would accept this as satisfactory, and in any case it would be necessary to assure her that, as far as sacrifices on her part were concerned, the programme of the Conference would be limited to the question of Bulgaria and Bosnia. Turkey was naturally afraid that, if a Conference did meet, further proposals to her disadvantage might be put forward.

Count Metternich asked whether this was to be regarded as a complete programme of the Conference.

I told him there were other things which might come in: such, for instance, as the alteration of Article 29, which affects Montenegro. Servia might also desire to be considered, but it would have to be a condition that nothing which was done for Servia was at the expense of Turkey. There might be some revision of the regulations about the Danube, which apparently Baron d'Aehrenthal had himself contemplated in his speech the other day. But no doubt when discussion had advanced further and M. Iswolsky went to Berlin, he would be able to explain the whole programme.

I told Count Metternich that I was not myself making any proposal. I was simply communicating these things to him for his information, because I felt that if a solution was to be found, it would not be by dividing the Powers into opposing camps: the Powers must keep in touch in order to secure unanimity.

Count Metternich said he had not yet received any instructions from his Government. But, speaking personally from what he believed to be the view of his Government, the sketch I had given him of what might be done for Turkey appeared to be reasonable, and such as might be acceptable to her. The question of the Capitulations was a complicated one. The principal difficulty, he said, was with regard to Austria, who might object to a Conference on the subject of her action.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 163-5.*]

He thought she would object if the Conference was to be opened by a protest on the part of Turkey against the annexation of Bosnia. But he seemed to think that possibly Austria, by communications with Turkey and by means of the compensation she was giving with regard to the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, might get over this difficulty. Austria however would not consent to appear before the Conference as a culprit.

I told him that, of course, there was a difficulty in getting both Turkey and Austria to agree to the idea of a Conference. We must first be sure that Turkey would accept, as we could not be parties, after what had passed, to forcing a Conference upon Turkey against her will.

Count Metternich said this was also the attitude of the German Government.

I suggested that, as a matter of fact, both Turkey and Austria wished to be sure of the results of the Conference before they would agree to any Conference.

Count Metternich asked me about Crete.

I told him I thought the question of Crete should not be included in the programme of the Conference, but should be examined by the four Powers who had undertaken a special obligation to Turkey in regard to Crete. If these four Powers could come to an agreement with Turkey it would no doubt be regularised by all the Powers afterwards.

Count Metternich observed that Turkey's authority in Crete had really disappeared, and therefore it was in Turkey's interest, as in the case of Bulgaria, that she should agree to give up the shadow of authority, which was worth nothing to her, and merely acted as a bar to good relations with the neighbouring States. He felt certain that if this bar could be removed Turkey's relations with the countries around her would improve very much.

I did not differ from this view. But I said the manner in which Austria and Bulgaria had carried out the recent changes had been a public affront to the new Government in Turkey, and we could not add another insult by declaring our obligation about Crete abrogated without Turkey's consent.

Count Metternich then asked me whether any other questions were likely to come before the Conference.

On my inquiring what sort of questions he meant, he mentioned the Dardanelles.

I told him that was a very large question. I thought it would be very undesirable to complicate matters by putting it in the programme of the Conference. If the question was included in the programme, Turkey might be very reluctant to agree to a Conference. It was also a question which required much consideration, and I asked him whether he knew the views of the German Government about it.

Count Metternich replied that he had not heard anything about it at Berlin for a long time past.

[I am, &c.]

F. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 374.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 36207/31738/08/44A.

(No. 72.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. October 13, 1908.

R. October 19, 1908.

It may be of interest to you if I attempt to give some explanation of the extraordinary excitement produced in Servia by the announcement of the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina to Austria-Hungary, an event which, in view of the complete Military and administrative subjection of these provinces to the Dual

Monarchy during the past 30 years, in no way touches the territorial or material interests of this country. For this explanation I venture in the first place to refer to the introduction of my General Report on the Kingdom of Serbia for the year 1906,⁽¹⁾ in which I sketched the aspirations of the Servian Nation for eventual union with the people of the same race and language who are under Turkish or Austrian dominion. The decay of the Turkish Empire naturally gave Serbia more hope of attaining her object in regard to the former than in regard to the latter, and with characteristic optimism Bosnia and the Herzegovina were considered still to be Turkish provinces, administered indeed by Austria, but whose fate had not yet been finally decided. The definite transfer of these provinces to Austria-Hungary is therefore felt by Servians as a crushing blow to their most cherished aspirations, leaving them nothing to hope for but some slight increase of territory towards Old Serbia, where their progress would soon be checked by the expansive tendencies of Bulgaria and the stubbornness of the Albanians. The idea of a Greater Serbia is fostered by the large number of Serb immigrants from the countries under foreign domination who have settled in the Kingdom, and it is remarkable how many of the prominent men in Belgrade are immigrants of this kind or their immediate descendants.

In this sense M. Spalaikovitch, the Secretary General of the Servian Ministry for Foreign Affairs, whose wife is a Bosnian and who has many connections in that country, tried to explain to me what he feared would be the fate of the occupied provinces now that they were finally to pass under Austrian rule. He believed that the Mahommedan Bosnians, who had remained in the country because they thought the occupation temporary and considered themselves still subjects of the Sultan, would now gradually migrate to Turkey, as all Mahommedans did when the country they inhabited passed under Christian rule. Their places would be promptly filled up by State aided German or Magyar colonists, who would also replace the Orthodox Serbs who migrated to the Kingdom or beyond the seas in consequence of their dissatisfaction with Austrian rule. By this means the Austro-Hungarian Government would destroy the homogeneous Serb character of the population of Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and those provinces and their inhabitants would be permanently lost to the Serb Nation. In view of these apprehensions he thought that the best compensation which Serbia could obtain from the intervention of the Powers, would be that they should make the annexation conditional upon an engagement on the part of Austria-Hungary that Bosnia and the Herzegovina should not be divided up between Dalmatia, Croatia and Hungary, but should remain an autonomous unit with a measure of self-Government which would permit the undisturbed development of the Servian or Serbo-Croatian Nationality in the country. In his opinion (given however quite unofficially) this would go further towards appeasing the feeling of desperation which had been aroused in Serbia by the annexation than any slight rectification of the frontier such as that which had been proposed to me by M. Milovanovitch.

Articles which have appeared in the semi-official "Samouprava" and what I have heard privately lead me to suppose that M. Pashitch and the other leaders of the Old Radical majority favour this view and that a demand for the integrity and autonomy of Bosnia and the Herzegovina may be put forward by Serbia if a Conference meets. I pointed out to M. Spalaikovitch, however, that once the Powers had acquiesced in the extension of Austrian Sovereignty to the occupied provinces, it might in future be difficult for them to watch over the interests of the Serb Nationality there without unwarrantable interference in the internal affairs of the Monarchy.

The suggestion for compensation to Serbia by a rectification of the frontier between Bosnia and the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar which was made by M. Milovanovitch on the 7th Instant, was subsequently explained to me by His Excellency as possible without any further encroachment upon Turkish territory by continuing the Drina line to a point close to the Montenegrin frontier, and dividing the strip between the Drina and the present boundary of the Sanjak between Serbia and Montenegro. I enclose a

(1) [Not reproduced.]

sketch-map⁽²⁾ on which this proposed new frontier is marked by red shading. According to a very rough calculation made from the map this strip would cover about 800 square miles, which would be a small deduction from the 20,000 square miles acquired by Austria-Hungary by the annexation.

I confess that I do not think M. Milovanovitch's suggestion a feasible one, as it would not satisfy Servian aspirations and would certainly be resisted by Austria-Hungary.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

(²) [Not reproduced.]

No. 375.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward,

*British Embassy, Constantinople,
October 13, 1908.*

The views which the Grand Vizier gave me yesterday and which he has sent to his Ambassador in London, cannot, I am sure be taken as his last word and the putting forward of the idea of the recovery of E. Roumelia is no doubt in order to have something to bargain with. At the same time a powerful and an intriguing Bulgaria is what all Turks dread most for the fate of Macedonia. This—of course if Bulgaria and Turkey do not make friends—in which I am at present no great believer. The majority of course know what a blow a war would be to the Constitution but if they thought they were going to lose Macedonia they would fight to the last man. They *might* be satisfied with a guarantee from the Powers that Macedonia should not be allowed to fall into the hands of Bulgaria—but I fear they will ask themselves why a guarantee of the Powers in 1908 is better security than the guarantee of the Treaty of Berlin of 1878.

I touched recently with the Grand Vizier on the question of the opening of the Straits. He was then strongly opposed to the giving of any special privileges to Russia and the Black Sea States and I cannot but believe that these privileges, given in no matter how restricted a form, would be fatal to Turkey. The attitude of the German Ambassador is not without its interest but his declaration yesterday that German policy in the Near East was exactly the same as the English made them smile. Marschall says that there should be a Declaration made by all the Powers that Turkey would suffer no territorial loss by going to a Congress and this added to the joint guarantee of Macedonia at the Congress would suffice. He is clearly violently opposed to any Straits privileges to Russia. Presumably there will be no question of the Congress sitting here. That would not do. The Turks are taking events very calmly at present but if they saw their interests in danger at the Congress it might produce a disagreeable anti-European movement. Kiamil is very firm in the saddle again just now and the power of the Committee is somewhat weakening. I do not think Ahmed Riza is of much value to them, nor is it worth your while to waste much time over him. His name carries something with it but he is not at all a practical man and I do not believe in his ever coming forward much here or being of much use to the country.

I am inclined to think that the Cretan question does not touch the Turks very closely. I was led to believe that they would feel it very much but if they can throw the responsibility for the loss on the Powers and could get a nice sum down for it that would satisfy them. I have heard £20,000,000 mentioned as a suitable sum and £100,000,000 for Bulgaria E. Roumelia and the Railway.

We must not lose sight of the fact that these external troubles have very much strengthened the hands of the reactionaries. A rough estimate puts these at 20 %

(¹) [Grey MSS. (Turkey), Vol. 40.]

of the population. A failure to get some satisfaction for Turkey would increase their numbers enormously and the temptation might be offered to go to war rather than face internal difficulties. What is probably at the back of the minds of most of the population is that they *must* fight Bulgaria some day but they want to choose the moment.

Events move so rapidly that I fear my letters can be of little value but I send you my appreciation of the moment for what they are worth.

Yours sincerely,
GERARD LOWTHER.

No. 376.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35716/31738/08/44A.

Berlin, D. October 14, 1908, 11.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 56.)

R. October 15, 1908, 11.15 A.M.

German Chancellor asked me to call at his request this evening. He read to me a long telegram from Count Metternich about your view of programme for Conference which coincided exactly with your Tel[egram] No. 139.⁽¹⁾ He also read to me his reply. He dwelt especially on the necessity of a complete arrangement being come to by all the Powers as to the questions to be discussed, and as to the assurances to be given to Turks, that not only would no further sacrifices be demanded of them, but that they should receive compensation of a pecuniary and moral nature for the losses they had sustained.

He went through the different points of your programme which on the whole he regarded with sympathy, though there were some points, more especially the abolition of Capitulations which would certainly meet with opposition from German financial and commercial classes.

It was impossible for Germany to abandon her ally and if Austria-Hungary declined to take part in Conference, Germany would decline also. But the German Government was sincerely desirous of supporting the new régime in Turkey. In fact

⁽¹⁾ [Tel. No. 139 to Sir F. Lascelles repeated the following telegram sent to Sir G. Lowther on the same day :

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 35524/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 13, 1908.

Tel. (No. 344.)

D. 1.25 P.M.

Our view of programme for a Conference is that as condition of recognition of Bulgarian Independence satisfactory compensation must be given to Turkey in money indemnity; Austrian annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and restoration of Sandjak of Novi Bazar to Turkey would also be recognized, but in return for all these changes and as evidence of goodwill to Turkey these would be an undertaking to abrogate Articles 23 and 61 of Treaty of Berlin and to substitute for the Capitulations Treaties of the kind usual between other civilized States as soon as we are satisfied that Constitutional Gov[ernmen]t and modern methods of administration are satisfactorily established and applied in Turkey. This should give considerable moral support to new régime for without the hopes inspired by this no such prospect would have been entertained.

Montenegro would be freed from Article 29, but I assume this would not be unwelcome to Turkey and if compensation of any kind is found for Serbia we should contend that it must not be at expense of Turkey.

It seems to us that a Conference so limited would not endanger further the interests of Turkey, but it is desirable to know views of Turkish Gov[ernmen]t.

It is proposed that question of Crete, should be examined by four occupying Powers with Turkey and not be included in programme of Conference though any arrangement made with Turkey by the four Powers would have to be considered by the Conference afterwards. It would be unnecessary to mention Crete for the moment if there is any prospect of a direct arrangement being made between Turkey and Greece.]

the large German financial and commercial interests in Turkey made them desire a stable state of things in the East, and more especially the maintenance of peace.

MINUTE.

Count Metternich has made a similar but less full communication to me to-day.⁽²⁾

E. G.

⁽²⁾ [Apparently that reported in *G.P.* XXVI, I, p. 167 (No. 9039).]

No. 377.

Memorandum by Sir E. Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35992/31738/08/44.

October 14, 1908.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Government agree that the opening of the Straits is fair and reasonable, and in principle they will not oppose it.

If the proposal made was that the Straits should be open on terms of perfect equality to all, the proposal would be one to which no exception could be taken.

The difficulty arises from the proposal to give Russia and the riverain Powers an exclusive, though limited, right. H[is] M[ajesty's] Government cannot but feel that the time is very inopportune for securing general assent to such an arrangement.

Feeling in England has very much resented the action of Austria; it would be greatly disappointed if Russia, after protesting against Austrian action, apparently used the occasion to secure an advantage for herself which had any appearance of prejudice to the position of Turkey, or altered the *status quo* to the disadvantage of others.

If, on the other hand, there is cordial cooperation between Russia and England to overcome present difficulties on disinterested lines, the good effect on public opinion here would be very marked and would predispose it to a change about the Straits in a sense favourable to Russia.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Government, however, agreeing in principle that some opening of the Straits is reasonable, cannot refuse to discuss the question.

They feel that a purely onesided arrangement, which would give the Black Sea Powers in time of war the advantage of having the whole of the Black Sea as an inviolable harbour from which cruisers and commerce destroyers could issue and retire at will, free from pursuit by a belligerent, is not one for which public opinion in England is prepared or which it could be induced to accept.

Any arrangement, therefore, must be one which, while giving Russia and the riverain Powers egress at all times under some such limited conditions as M. Isvolsky has indicated and securing them from menace or the establishment of foreign naval power in the Black Sea in time of peace, would yet contain such an element of reciprocity as would in the eventuality of war place belligerents on an equal footing with regard to the passage of the Straits.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Government would further observe that the consent of Turkey would be a necessary preliminary to any proposal. To put pressure upon Turkey at this moment to make an arrangement which she might regard, however unreasonably, as a menace to her interests would defeat what we believe is the joint object of England and Russia, viz. : to prevent the overthrow of the present Turkish Government, and the confusion and anarchy which would probably result.

⁽¹⁾ [This memorandum is quoted in French with some omissions in *Livre Noir*, Paris (1922), II, p. 458. The text is printed correctly in S. A. Adamov : *Constantinople i proliivi*, Moscow (1925), Vol. II, p. 5. It is mentioned but not quoted in Lord Grey : *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, p. 186. It was transmitted to Sir A. Nicolson in Despatch No. 319, D. October 19, 1908, R. October 31. The only version of the despatch in the Foreign Office archives is a rough draft, but the document itself is in the Embassy archives, from which the text has been printed below, p. 456, No. 394.]

No. 378.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 35708/31738/08/44.

Tcl. (No. 497.)

Foreign Office, October 14, 1908.

I have given M. Isvolsky a Memorandum of the view of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] about the Straits;⁽¹⁾ though not going so far as he had hoped he accepts it. We have agreed upon a programme for a Conference. M. Isvolsky agreed readily to continue working Afghan Convention without the consent of the Amir, though we will continue to negotiate with Amir to obtain that; M. Isvolsky has taken in good part our complaint about proceedings of Russian officers in Persia and my impression is that general result of our conversations will be distinctly favourable.

(1) [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 379.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 35660/31738/08/44.

(No. 318.) Secret.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 14, 1908.

Monsieur Iswolsky arrived in London on the 9th instant and called upon me at the Foreign Office on the 10th instant.

His Excellency began his conversation with me by a long explanation of what had passed between him and Baron d'Aerenthal.

It was, in substance, what I had already heard, but he spoke very frankly of Baron d'Aerenthal as being tortuous and insincere and always wishing to compromise the person with whom he was dealing. It was not true that he (Monsieur Iswolsky) had given his consent in advance to what Austria had done about Bosnia. He had simply exchanged views, and had intended to discuss in Paris and London, afterwards, the possibility of the annexation of Bosnia by Austria and the consequences of such an eventuality. Meanwhile, this had been sprung upon him.

He made the most of the compensation offered by Austria as regards Novi Bazar. In Austrian hands this would have prepared the way for an advance and have been a wedge driven into the Slav States.

He emphasised the fact that these breaches of the international Treaty should be dealt with by a Conference, and he proposed that a Conference should be announced as soon as possible with a definite programme to deal with Bulgarian independence, Bosnia, Herzegovina, Novi-Bazar, and Montenegro.

But it would not be enough simply to ratify what had already been done: that would not secure enough compensation either for Turkey or the other Balkan States.

Bulgaria had shown, in this matter, no consideration for Russian wishes, and Russia was prepared to be stiff in dealing with her. It might be arranged at the Conference that Bulgaria should pay for the Eastern Roumelian Tribute and the Railway. Servia might have some rectification of her frontier, but it must not be at the expense of Turkey. There might also be a revision of the regulations about the Danube which would put the Balkan States on a more favourable footing: this would be in the nature of compensation to them at the expense of Austria. For Turkey, the hope might be held out that, if things went well, the Financial Commission and the joint right of superintendence given to the Powers with regard to Macedonia and Armenia by Treaty would be done away with; and that the Capitulations also would be altered, if the Turkish Government justified such a step.

Russia would not raise the question of the Straits at the Conference.

Monsieur Iswolsky urged very strongly that, if Russia could satisfy Turkey that an arrangement about the Straits was safe for Turkish interests, England should not

(1) [Printed in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 183-5, but the name is there spelled "Isvolsky."]

oppose it. He told me that there had been great opposition in Russia to the Anglo-Russian Convention. He had had to spend great energy in getting it accepted in Russia. All the Liberal and advanced elements in Russia were in favour of an understanding with England; but the reactionary elements were against it, and would like to upset the Convention. The Emperor was by training and education not on the Liberal side. It was possible to keep him reconciled to reforms in Russia only by proving to him that things were going better: for instance, whereas two years ago there was a state of active revolution, the state of affairs was now much improved. In the same way, it would be fatal to a good understanding with England if, when the question of the Straits was raised, it was found that England blocked the way and that no improvement followed from good relations with England.

His proposal to Turkey would be that ships of war belonging to the riverain Powers on the Black Sea should have a right of way through the Straits. They would not be allowed to remain in the Straits. There might be regulations that not more than three vessels should go through at a time, and that no other vessels should go through for 24 hours after the first. Such regulations would, of course, only apply in times when Turkey was at peace. In time of war, Turkey would be able to do as she pleased.

In other words, the closing of the Straits would be maintained, subject to a limited servitude of this kind in favour of Russia and the riverain States.

Monsieur Iswolsky went on to say that the present was a most critical moment. It might either consolidate and strengthen the good relations between England and Russia; or it might upset them altogether. His own position was at stake, for he was entirely bound up with the policy of a good understanding with England, which he had advocated against all opposition.

I asked him to give me a draft of what he proposed with regard to the Conference, so that I might have something definite to put before the Cabinet: this he promised to do.

I said I realised how critical the moment was. We were most anxious to work with Russia. We were in favour of the new régime in Turkey, not in order that we might support Turkey against Russia, but because we regarded an independent and well-governed Turkey as the only alternative to anarchy and confusion.

Monsieur Iswolsky said the Russian desire now was to be friendly with Turkey. They did not wish to have Constantinople for themselves: it was not a place which could be held like Gibraltar, it had to be made a Capital, they could not make it their own Capital, and they would not wish to see it in any hands but those of Turkey. Therefore, they wished to have a peaceful and well-governed Turkey, with whom they could be friendly.

I told him I recognised the Russian feeling about the Straits; but the proposal he had now put before me was not the same as that which Count Benckendorff had discussed with me at the time of the Anglo-Russian Convention. The proposal then had been that, while Russia should have egress from the Black Sea through the Straits, other Powers should have liberty to send their vessels of war into the Straits without going into the Black Sea.

Monsieur Iswolsky pointed out that as Russia would not ask for any right to stay in the Straits, it would be useless to grant a right of access to the Straits without staying there and without going on into the Black Sea. But he was not putting the proposal before me now on the ground that I had made any promise previously. He was putting it forward from the point of view of good relations.

If Russia did not make the proposal now, it might be blocked by Germany or Austria at some future time; and he hoped that if Russia could get the consent of Turkey voluntarily to an arrangement such as he had suggested we would not oppose it.

I told Monsieur Iswolsky I must have time to consult the Prime Minister and my Colleagues, who had seen the proposal made some time ago, but to whom this would be quite new.

I urged that some immediate proof of confidence in the new régime in Turkey and good will to it should be shown by offering a guaranteed loan if Turkey desired it. This would at once produce a general feeling of confidence and tranquillity.

[I am, &c.]

E. GREY.]

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 380.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. 35881/37138/08/44.

(No. 286.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 14, 1908.

Count Metternich told me to-day he had received from his Government a telegram sent before they could have received the communication which I had made to him as to the proposed Conference.⁽¹⁾

The view of the German Government was that the integrity of Turkey must be maintained; that the points to be discussed at the Conference must be clear; and that there should be an agreement beforehand as to how the points would be settled.

Germany would have to stand by Austria, and Austria felt it beneath her dignity to have the question of Bosnia discussed: this was a difficulty in the way of the Conference. But if Austria and Turkey could agree between themselves about Bosnia, then the Conference might meet to sanction what Austria had done.

Count Metternich added, as a personal idea of his own, that as it was in the interests of all that the trouble should be appeased; as what had been done could not be undone; and as the difficulty was rather one of form as to how to get things accepted, perhaps we could advise Turkey to accept the action of Austria.

I told him that, even if it was admitted that the restoration of the Sanjak was adequate compensation for Bosnia, the action of Austria was nevertheless a public affront to Turkey, owing to the manner in which it had been done. I did not see how Turkey could countersign this action of Austria without being humiliated. It might be possible that, if Turkey could be assured of some restoration of her interests, she might agree on this condition to come to the Conference; and there if this condition was secured she might in the interests of peace and in recognition of the good-will which the Powers had shown her in other matters, consent to waive her protest against Austria. But I did not think that anything more than this could be expected.

As regards compensation to Turkey I said I believed that Turkey when she lost Bulgaria, Servia Bosnia etc., had never been relieved of any portion of the debt, which might fairly have been the share of these provinces; I did not know whether it would be possible for Austria to build a golden bridge for Turkey's consent. Count Metternich said he doubted Austria being willing to give anything more than the Sanjak.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 436-7, No. 373, and *G.P.* XXVI, I, p. 167.]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Vienna, October 14, 1908.

I was very glad and not at all surprised to get your private telegram of the 5th of October⁽²⁾ respecting Baron d'Aehrenthal's statement that he did not believe of [*sic*] the declaration of Bulgarian independence. As it happened, I was with Baron Call at the time the notification of the declaration reached the Austro-Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I then took the opportunity of expressing my intense surprise that only two days before, Baron d'Aehrenthal had expressed to me his disbelief in its imminence. Baron Call assured me that Baron d'Aehrenthal had spoken no more than the truth. They at the Ministry had not had the slightest idea that it was coming so quick. They knew of course that independence was in the air and would come sooner or later, but they had really had no idea that the Bulgarian Government would act so quickly. Next day I communicated to Baron d'Aehrenthal your telegram respecting the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the close of our conversation he alluded to the declaration of Bulgarian independence. I at once seized the opportunity of saying that the fact that two days before the declaration he had expressed to me his disbelief in its imminence had surprised me exceedingly and, to tell him the truth, had made a somewhat painful impression on me. I would also not conceal from him that you shared this impression. I hastened to add that I was not making any official complaint, and that I had no instructions to do so, but that I had wished, as one who had always been frank and straightforward with him, to tell him openly what impression his statement had made upon both you and me, and to ask him straight out how it was to be explained. He told me that ever since the declaration had been made public he had been thinking what I should have thought of him, and that the idea that he must have cut an exceedingly poor figure both in your eyes and mine had worried him exceedingly. "Well," he continued, "I give you my solemn word of honour that I had no idea that the declaration of Bulgarian independence was so imminent. I knew that it must come in the near future, in a few weeks perhaps, but that it should have been made so soon was a complete surprise to me." He added that it was not only a surprise but a disagreeable surprise, as the fact that the declaration had come when it did placed him in the somewhat humiliating position of appearing in the eyes of Europe to have followed the lead of Bulgaria.

When a man gives you his word of honour one has to accept it, and there was nothing more to be said. But, from putting two and two together I am pretty sure in my mind that his word of honour only extended perhaps to the precise date. He could easily have arranged that he shouldn't know this, and so have provided for future contingencies and the squaring of his conscience. It is also open to question whether it suited him best that the declaration should precede or follow the annexation. All I know is that Tschirschky told me the evening before I saw d'Aehrenthal that, in his opinion, the declaration of Bulgarian independence would precede the annexation of the Provinces. I may mention here that I learnt subsequently from a friend that Count Lützow, the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Rome, had told him four days before my conversation with d'Aehrenthal that the declaration of Bulgarian independence was a matter of days if not hours! It is strange that Lützow should have been better informed than his chief, and still stranger that Tschirschky, who saw d'Aehrenthal every day at Budapest, should also have been better informed.

My conversation with Tschirschky was altogether of rather an interesting and perhaps illuminating nature. On my saying to him that there was a great deal of talk about the annexation of the Provinces he proceeded to advocate the measure, saying that, to his mind, it made for peace, as Turkey could not object and would,

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 1.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 389. No. 299.]

after the first moment of irritation, realize that the loss of the Provinces was an advantage to her rather than a misfortune. He then laid before me all the arguments which Baron d'Aehrenthal has made use of since. When I threw a fly over him by saying that I supposed Bulgaria would follow suit by declaring its independence he said "No, I don't think so, she will, in my opinion, not follow suit, but give the lead."

Tschirschky's accurate knowledge as to the order of events and as to the details of a plan which had not yet officially reached the Powers, his strong advocacy of the measure and his employment of nearly all the arguments with which d'Aehrenthal has now rendered us so familiar tell, in my opinion, a curious tale—a tale scarcely harmonizing with the statements so freely made in the German and Austrian official Press, that Germany knew nothing of the plan, had nothing to do with it and under certain aspects regards it with some disfavour.

To return to my conversation with Baron d'Aehrenthal. After finishing with the Bulgarian question, I said to him that there was another matter which I should much like to clear up. A statement had been made that the Austro-Hungarian Government had received the consent of other Powers—viz. Italy and Russia—to the annexation of the Provinces. Information had, however, reached His Majesty's Government that such was not the case. This matter had also been the subject of unfavourable comment and caused a disagreeable impression. I should be sincerely glad if he could enable me to remove that impression, which, if the facts were true, I must confess to sharing.

Baron d'Aehrenthal said that there again he had been unfortunate. Khevenhüller was, though old, exceedingly sprightly in temperament, and he had evidently been too exuberant. There had been nothing in his instructions to warrant the statement he had made, and the Ambassador must have either misunderstood his instructions or gone beyond them. What he had apparently announced was neither true then nor now. So far was it untrue that even at the present moment he was unable to say that he had received the assent of Italy and Russia; all he felt justified in saying was that he had every reason to hope that he would secure it in the near future. What grounds he had for hoping to have the assent of Russia, I could not ascertain from him, but your conversation with Iswolsky will no doubt clear up the matters, which for the moment appear rather dark. My French colleague, who is intimate with Iswolsky and saw him almost immediately after the Buchlau interview, tells me that Iswolsky informed him that d'Aehrenthal spoke vaguely at Buchlau about the necessity of annexing the Provinces some time or other, and had given him the impression, also vaguely, that he, d'Aehrenthal, wanted him during his tour to sound other Powers on the subject and obtain their views. This shows that Iswolsky went off quite easy in his mind, only to find a "fait accompli" by the time he reached Paris.

D'Aehrenthal's diplomacy seems to belong to an earlier school than that in vogue in modern days; but he has been successful, with his vague conversations so easy to be explained either way afterwards, in doing Iswolsky a bad turn twice and in exactly the same way. But it is strange that he should have the face, both in the Delegations and in official communiqués, to harp on the "notoriously good relations existing between Austria-Hungary and Russia."⁽²⁾

Yours very sincerely,
W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

This letter contains much valuable information. I cannot believe in M. d'A[ehrenthal]'s "word of honour" statement, as facts belie it.

E.R.

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter deals with public opinion in Austria-Hungary, and the influence of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand.]

No. 382.

*Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.**Therapia, October 15, 1908.*

F.O. 35667/31738/08/44.

D. 1 A.M.

Tel. (No. 327.)

R. 7 A.M.

Your tel[egram]s No. 344⁽¹⁾ and 348.⁽²⁾
Bulgaria.

I have explained your views to the Grand Vizier but he seems to be in a rather uncompromising attitude as to necessity of maintaining the *status quo* of 1885 in Eastern Roumelia. He says its recognition as part of Bulgaria would inevitably mean a general war in the Near East in the future and that a war now would be almost preferable. Turkey could no more count upon guarantees of treaties after her recent experience and the value of European sympathy was problematical if she was compelled to accept these *faits accomplis*. An effective guarantee such as a strong army on the frontier would cost her too much to maintain permanently as she has a large empire to protect. He suggested that Eastern Roumelia should be guaranteed by England, France, Italy and perhaps Russia keeping detachments of troops there like in Crete. I pointed out insuperable difficulties of such a proposal but he wished it submitted to you. To justify this attitude H[is] H[ighness] says that public opinion could not be induced to accept the forfeiture of rights regarding that province.

Articles 23 and 61 he regarded as automatically abrogated by the establishment of constitution and the abandonment of the capitulations must similarly come in the natural course as already mentioned in my tel[egram] No. 317.⁽³⁾

Advantages to Montenegro under Art[icle] 29 were immaterial to Turkey and he was at a loss to understand what form compensation could be devised for Servia, which would not be at the expense of Turkey. If the present spoliations were ratified by Conference, Italy certainly would seek to realise her designs on Albania.

Germany, H[is] H[ighness] said was naturally in favour of financial compensations as this would furnish guarantees for the Bagdad Railway.

German Ambassador had given him to understand that Germany would not be represented at the Conference except on the stipulation that the Bosnian question should not be discussed as desired by Austria.

He appeared deeply disappointed at the idea of the Cretan annexation to Greece being sanctioned by Powers at a Conference and he would rather Crete should be occupied by Great Britain like Cyprus than that it should go to Greece. He added that if Crete were annexed to Greece separatist tendencies would permeate the Turkish islands in the Aegean Sea.

As regards proposed privileges to Russia for the Straits Grand Vizier spoke much more strongly today and said that Turkey could never consent. I should mention that Grand Vizier said that he had not received the Ottoman Ambassador in London's report of your suggestions for a programme and it is possible that he may modify his views on its receipt.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 440, No. 376, note.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 433, No. 370.]

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 426, No. 362.]

No. 383.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 36443/31738/08/44.

(No. 434.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 15, 1908.

I communicated to the Turkish Ambassador to-day, as the result of my conversations with M. Iswolsky, the heads of a possible programme.⁽¹⁾

(¹) [*v. infra*, p. 453, No. 390.]

I explained to him that the proposal about Servia and Montenegro was subject to the condition, accepted as I understood by Russia and France as well as us, that they should get no advantages at the expense of Turkey; and the adoption of the programme was dependent upon the consent of Turkey. I therefore put forward these suggestions in order to have the views of the Turkish Government.

I again urged upon the Ambassador very strongly that the real interest of Turkey was not to dispute questions of form, as for instance in connection with Eastern Roumelia, but to give up these questions of form, and to get as much substance as she could in return for the changes which had now been made. In this way, Turkey would be able to get the present situation cleared, and then, with the moral support of several of the Powers, she would be able to devote herself to the development of her own resources: this should be her real object now that she had started on the path of reform. In order to attain this object it was essential to settle the present troubles; it would be unwise to prolong disputes about questions of form, and still more unwise to go to war about them.

I asked the Turkish Ambassador to make it clear to his Government that I did sympathise with and understand Turkey's feeling about these questions of form; and that the advice I gave was not due to any lack of sympathy, but to real consideration for the practical interests of Turkey.

I told him that M. Iswolsky had proposed that the Straits should be open for express no opinion till I knew what the Austrian proposals were. Whether these proposals were satisfactory or not, it would be for Turkey to say.

The Turkish Ambassador asked me whether Austria had desired me to support her proposals.

I answered that was no doubt what Austria would like. Of course, if Turkey came to us and said Austria had made proposals which were satisfactory, the news would be very welcome. But it was for Turkey to pronounce her opinion first, and I should certainly not recommend or support anything until I knew Turkey's opinion.

The Turkish Ambassador then asked me about the question of the Straits.

I told him that M. Iswolsky had proposed that the Straits should be open for egress from the Black Sea under the same Regulations, or similar ones, as now existed for the Russian Volunteer Fleet: not more than three ships to pass through the Straits at one time, none of them to stop or anchor during the passage, and so forth. I had informed M. Iswolsky that Turkey did not desire to have this question raised just now. I had told him that I thought it very reasonable that Turkey should take this view, and I had made any change with regard to the Straits dependent upon Turkey's willing consent; I had also stipulated that no pressure should be applied to Turkey with regard to this question. But I had informed M. Iswolsky that, in principle, the British Government agreed that the Straits might be opened under proper conditions: which would be safe for Turkey, which would leave Turkey perfectly free in time of war to open or close the Straits as she pleased, and which if Turkey was neutral would not place any of the belligerents at a disadvantage.—I hoped that Russia would now postpone the question. If, however, it was raised at Constantinople, and the Turks were unwilling to discuss it, they had only to say so.

The Ambassador asked me whether, if Russia did put forward the question and Turkey refused to consider it, this would lead to bad relations with Russia.

I told him it would not, if Turkey refused on the ground that the question was inopportune and that she did not wish to consider it at the moment, although she might be willing to discuss it later on, and in answer to a comment of his that three ships at one time might be too many I said that this was a detail which could no doubt be altered; nothing was settled and I had not discussed points of detail because I hope that the whole question would be postponed for the present.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 384.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 36002/31738/08/44.

(No. 113.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 15, 1908.

Count Mensdorff came to tell me to-day that Baron d'Aerenthal hoped it might be possible, by direct negotiations between Austria and Turkey, to come to an arrangement.

He gathered that such negotiations were already on foot and he asked me whether, if Austria came to an agreement with Turkey, it would not be a good way out of the difficulty.

I said our main object was to see effected a settlement in which the interests of Turkey, whose prestige had suffered greatly by the manner in which the recent changes had been made, should be considered and compensated. If Turkey could be satisfied with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the particular manner in which she was satisfied did not so much matter. But I had not yet heard anything from Turkey about direct negotiations with Austria, and until I knew what the Turkish view was I could hardly express any view of my own as to the prospect. If Turkey came to us and said that Austria had made an arrangement which was satisfactory to her, it would of course be very welcome news.

Count Mensdorff told me that Austria was not opposed, in principle, to a Conference; and if she made an arrangement with Turkey she would not object to its being mentioned at the Conference. He enquired as to the programme of the Conference.

I told him I had exchanged views with M. Iswolsky; but as long as I understood that Austria would not submit the question of Bosnia to a Conference as an open question, it was not possible to propose to her a programme which included that. Before any programme could be put forward officially there must first be some approach to general agreement between the Powers.⁽¹⁾

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.⁽¹⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 151-2, 155-6.*]

No. 385.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Lascelles.

F.O. 36003/31738/08/44.

(No. 287.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 15, 1908.

Count Metternich told me to-day that in answer to the communication I had made to him the German Government agreed that there ought to be a clear understanding beforehand as to the contents, purposes, and scope of the programme of a Conference.⁽¹⁾

They regarded with sympathy our suggestions as to getting compensation for Turkey, and on the condition that there was a clear preliminary understanding they would not object in principle to a Conference. They regarded with satisfaction the

⁽¹⁾ [*v. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 175-7.*]

endeavour to take into account Turkish interests, and would meet us entirely in this endeavour. Turkey should not be asked to agree to a Conference unless the programme was exactly fixed and offered real security that Turkey would not be asked to incur new sacrifices and would receive moral and financial indemnity.

I gave Count Metternich the heads of the suggested programme for a Conference, as the final result of my conversations with M. Iswolsky. I explained to him that it was not given as a definite proposal, but in order that there might be an exchange of views. The programme of the Conference must be dependent upon the consent of Turkey, and I did not yet know what points she might raise.

Count Metternich, while speaking sympathetically of Turkey, said he thought she would be wise to give up what after all was only shadow and to get substance in return.

Count Metternich again asked me about the question of the Straits, whether it had formed the subject of negotiations though it was not to be in the programme of the Conference:

I told him M. Iswolsky and I had discussed the Straits :⁽²⁾ for some time past it had been the view of English Governments that they should not continue to insist unconditionally upon the Straits remaining closed.

Count Metternich remarked that he thought there had been a declaration some time ago that we would agree to the opening of the Straits, on condition that they were opened equally to all.

I said I did not know that any such declaration had been made publicly. But if the Straits were to be opened, the extent to which this should be done would require much consideration; and it was not reasonable to expect that Turkey, who was primarily concerned, would be willing to discuss the subject at present, when her hands were already full of troubles. An unconditional opening of the Straits, for instance, would expose Constantinople to capture by a *coup de main*.

Prince Bülow having expressed satisfaction at my having said with regard to Germany and Austria that I understood Germany's desire to support her ally, I remarked that this must not be taken to mean that I approved of the conduct of the ally, and this Count Metternich said was also quite understood.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 429–30, No. 364, and pp. 442–4, No. 379.]

No. 386.

Sir F. Lascelles to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 36158/31738/08/44A.

(No. 454.) Confidential.

Sir,

Berlin, D. October 15, 1908.

R. October 19, 1908.

I called upon Prince Bülow at his invitation at 6 p.m. yesterday and had a conversation with him of an hour's duration. After expressing regret at my approaching departure from Berlin he entered upon a long disquisition upon the mutability of human affairs. Who would have considered possible a hundred years ago that England could ever become the friend of France, or 30 years ago that Germany could become the ally of Austria, or at a more recent period that a friendly arrangement should have been come to between England and Russia. All these things had taken place and went to show that any arrangements, however excellent they may have been at the time they were made, became susceptible of modification as circumstances changed and now it was proposed that a Conference of the

Signatory Powers should be held to alter certain Articles in the Treaty of Berlin. He had received a long Telegram from the German Ambassador in London giving your views of the programme for the Conference. He was good enough to Translate this telegram for me into French and I perceived that it coincided with your telegram to Sir Gerard Lowther No. 344 of the 13th instant.⁽¹⁾ His Serene Highness also read to me (in French) the reply which he had sent to Count Metternich. He was glad to say that in principle he agreed with your view as to the necessity of providing compensation for the Turks and of giving them the certainty that no further sacrifices should be demanded of them. But there was one thing that Germany could not do, and that was to desert her ally. If therefore Austria declined to join the Conference Germany would be compelled to decline also. He then went at length into the various points mentioned in Count Metternich's Telegram,⁽²⁾ some of which he thought might give rise to considerable discussion more especially the question of the abolition of the Capitulations, which would meet the opposition of the German merchants and financiers who were interested in Turkey. He was in complete sympathy with the idea that the fullest moral support should be given to the new régime in Turkey, and indeed the very large German financial and commercial interests in that country made the German Government earnestly desire that Turkey should be strong and prosperous under her new institutions.

His Serene Highness observed that so far he had been considering the effect which the Conference would have upon Turkey and the Balkan States by recognising the recent action of Austria and Bulgaria and providing for due compensation to them, but was it not possible that at all events some of the Great Powers might wish to obtain some advantage for themselves. It had been stated that Russia would raise the question of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, but he had heard from Count Metternich that the question was not to be included in the Programme for the Conference. Then again there was a suspicion that Italy might seek for some advantage for herself on the eastern shore of the Adriatic. He believed that the Italian Government would be very amenable to advice from you on account of the support which they hoped to be able to count upon which England could furnish them at sea. He was well acquainted with the Italians. He had been Ambassador at Rome where he had now acquired property, he had married an Italian wife and could regard himself as half an Italian. He could therefore fully sympathize with the desire of Italy for the support of the military forces of Germany on land and the naval forces of England on the sea.

From this conversation, in which Prince Bülow indulged to even a greater extent than usual in vague generalities, and in the course of which he made some remarks of a more confidential nature, which I will reserve for a more private communication, I gathered the impression that the German Government had every desire for the success of the new order of things in Turkey to which they would give their moral support, provided that this did not clash with the interests of their ally whom they were determined not to abandon.

I have, &c.

FRANK C. LASCELLES.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 440, No. 376, note.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 441, No. 376, note 2.]

No. 387.

Sir E. Grey to M. Isvolski.

F.O. 35992/31738/08/44.

Private. Confidential.

Dear Mr. Iswolsky,

Foreign Office, October 15, 1908.

My own personal opinion cannot increase or diminish the force of the official statement which I have made.⁽¹⁾ But as in the course of our conversations I have dwelt

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 441, No. 377.]

much upon the difficulty of settling the question of the Straits at the present moment, I should like before you leave to repeat that my motive in doing so has not been a desire to keep the Straits closed. On the contrary, I positively desire to see an arrangement made, which will open the Straits on terms which would be acceptable to Russia and to the riverain States of the Black Sea, while not placing Turkey or outside Powers at an unfair disadvantage. Some such arrangement seems to me essential to the permanent establishment of good-will between Russia and ourselves.

I also attach much importance to what you have said to me to the effect that Russia desires now to be on friendly terms with Turkey,⁽²⁾ and that the opening of the Straits would remove a bar to cordial relations between the two countries. I believe that the course of events will make the truth of this felt. At a favourable time I should be ready to support this view at Constantinople; for the moment, however, Turkey, who is beset by sudden troubles, has asked that no pressure should be applied to her to do now reluctantly what she might do willingly later on. And I believe that feeling both at Constantinople and in England will be so favourably affected by a disinterested co-operation between Russia and England to pull Turkey through the present crisis, that this will do more than anything else to prepare the way for dealing with the question of the Straits later on: a state of feeling which I shall welcome.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 429, No. 364.]

No. 388.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 35667/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 16, 1908.

Tel. (No. 358.)

D. 6.45 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 327.⁽¹⁾

We have secured that the question of the Straits should not be mentioned in the programme of the Conference; we have urged upon Russia that it is not opportune to ask Turkey to negotiate about it now, and that the consideration of it should therefore be postponed. At whatever time our consent would depend upon that of Turkey being given without pressure, and upon regulations of opening being such as to guard against any possible danger to Constantinople.

As to the other points, I fully understand and sympathise with the feeling of the Grand Vizier; but I am sure that the wise course for Turkey is to give up what are purely points of form in return for a settlement, which would give her some substantial pecuniary compensation and some prospect of revision of Articles 23 and 61 of Berlin Treaty and of Capitulations in her favour. To stand out on points of form would not postpone, but would hasten further trouble. To go to war about them would be to wreck prospects of reform in Turkey for the sake of a shadow; while even a successful war would only further impoverish Turkey without obtaining for her compensating advantages.

We shall do our utmost at any Conference to ensure that Turkey shall get as much substance as possible, and we have made it a condition that any rectification of frontier for Serbia or Montenegro shall come from Bosnia or Herzegovina if at all, and not from Turkey.

The suggested programme still depends upon Turkey's consent: it will probably encounter opposition from Austria, but I think this may be overcome, and if so I believe Turkey can be pulled through present crisis, then she will get breathing time, and under the new régime immensely improve her position in a few years.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 447, No. 382.]

Grand Vizier's proposals for guarantee of Eastern Roumelia and occupation of Crete are quite impracticable. Under the new régime Turkey has better hopes than she has had for many years past: it would be lamentable if she ruined these hopes by preferring shadows to substance.

No. 389.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 35778/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 16, 1908.

Tel. (No. 506.)

D. 9 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 203 (of Oct[ober] 15).⁽¹⁾

Our views have been stated very fully to M. Isvolsky. I have in conversation with Turkish Ambassador already pointed out that some arrangement for opening the Straits would remove a bar to complete friendly relations between Turkey and Russia. But Turkish Ambassador has pressed me very urgently not to raise the question now when Turkish feeling is so sorely tried by recent events. In order that Russia should gain Turkey's confidence I think it is essential that she should defer to this request of Turkey and cooperate in getting Turkey out of present difficulties before pressing her about the Straits. Full text of what has been said to M. Isvolsky will follow by despatch and it would surely be desirable for Russian Gov[ernment] to consult with him at leisure before deciding to take any step.

Repeated to Constantinople (No. 355) October 16, 1908.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram contained the substance of Despatch No. 457 of October 16, printed below, p. 454, No. 391.]

No. 390.

Memorandum respecting the Near East.

Heads of Programme for Conference agreed upon between M. Isvolski and Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 36000/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 16, 1908.

Les points suivants pourraient être adoptés par les Puissances comme devant faire l'objet des travaux de la Conférence :—

1. Bulgarie, son statut juridique et ses obligations financières à l'égard de la Turquie.
2. Bosnie et Herzégovine.
3. Sandjak de Novi-Bazar.
4. Stipulations de l'Article 23 du Traité de Berlin, concernant les provinces de la Turquie d'Europe.
5. Article 61, concernant les provinces habitées par les Arméniens.
6. Stipulations de l'Article 29, limitant les droits souverains du Monténégro.
7. Avantages à procurer à la Serbie et au Monténégro.⁽²⁾
8. Droits des États Balcaniques en tant que riverains du Danube.
9. Questions des Capitulations et des bureaux de postes étrangers en Turquie.

⁽¹⁾ [A copy was handed to Count Mensdorff on 20th October, having been previously given to other Ambassadors, etc. The main points were telegraphed by Count Metternich to Berlin on the 15th October, G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 175-6.]

⁽²⁾ [According to Mr. A. Parker's Memorandum, "it was only at the instance of Sir E. Grey that the word 'territoriaux' was dropped." v. also *supra*, p. 428, No. 363, note 1.]

P.S.—La question de la Crète comme étant plus directement du ressort des Quatre Puissances Protectrices, ces dernières l'examineront de concert avec la Turquie et en référeront à la Conférence.

No. 391.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 37056/31738/08/44A.

(No. 457.)

St. Petersburg, D. October 16, 1908.

Sir,

R. October 26, 1908.

M. Tcharykoff informed me last evening that he had received a telegram from M. Iswolsky stating that the question of liberating Russia from the restrictions imposed on her war-ships with regard to their passage through the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles was to be discussed with the Sublime Porte, and if an Agreement were arrived at with the Ottoman Government that the matter would then be submitted to the Conference of the Great Powers. He said that these discussions would commence without delay, and he would be grateful if I would telegraph to you and suggest from him that H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Constantinople should give confidential advice to the Sublime Porte to treat the question in a conciliatory spirit, and to meet the wishes of the Russian Government. He said that the Russian Government would be prepared to agree to any regulations which the Sublime Porte might wish to establish as to the details of the question, such as the number of ships which should traverse the straits at one time, the obligation not to interrupt their passage through the Straits, etc., etc. It was eminently desirable that friendly and neighbourly relations should be established between Russia and Turkey, and no measure would more assist towards the removal of any hindrances in the way of a thoroughly hearty reconciliation than the abolition of the existing obstacles to the free passage into the Mediterranean. In view of the disturbance of the equilibrium in the Balkans it was evident that it was to the interests both of Russia and Turkey to live upon terms of the closest amity; and the new situation which had arisen in Turkey would be greatly benefited if Russia were to co-operate cordially with Great Britain and France in assisting the reform party towards the attainment of their aims. He thought that these considerations might be explained to the Sublime Porte by His Majesty's Government. Moreover now that Great Britain had considerably reduced her fleet in the Mediterranean the appearance of a friendly flag in that sea might be of some advantage to her.⁽¹⁾

I observed to M. Tcharykoff that doubtless the whole question of the Dardanelles had been thoroughly threshed out between you and M. Iswolsky, and it seemed to me a little unnecessary to communicate further with you on the subject. Sir G. Lowther would be in possession of your views and would know what attitude to assume. I was not aware that our fleet in the Mediterranean would ever require any assistance, and indeed at present there was no flag in the Mediterranean which was not a friendly one. M. Tcharykoff remarked that one more friendly flag would not be out of place, and though he was aware that the question had been fully discussed with M. Iswolsky in London, he would still beg of me to telegraph as he had suggested. I replied that, of course, if he desired it, I would do so. I observed to M. Tcharykoff that, so far as I had been able to gather, public opinion here was in general indifferent to the question of the opening of the Dardanelles. He admitted that this was the case, but said that Russian public opinion did not regard the question from the point of view of the improvement it might effect on the relations of Russia with Turkey, and it would be necessary to educate Russian public opinion to take a just appreciation of the

⁽¹⁾ [The first report made by Count Metternich on England and the Straits question was on 24 October, 1908, v. *G.P.* XXVI, I, p. 367 and n.]

matter. I told him that in the question of the Dardanelles British public opinion would also have to receive some preparation, as the passage of Russian warships would constitute a new departure.

I may mention that the "Novoe Vremya" in a leading Article yesterday struck a new note in the endless discussions which daily appear on the Balkan question by advocating an understanding with Turkey. Moreover the paper alludes to the Dardanelles question in a friendly spirit, while formerly it avoided any reference to it. I should add that the article is in reply to one in the "Ikdam," where apparently the testament of Peter the Great had been cited as forming the basis of Russian policy and therefore precluding intimate relations with Russia. The following extract represents the tenour of the article.

"New times have created new interests, and it is by these and not by historic phantasies such as apocryphal wills that Russia and Turkey must now be guided. At the present time there are more interests in common than there are conflicting interests, and a policy should be founded on this community of interest. Attempts are being made to alarm Turkey on the Dardanelles question, but there is no reason whatever why this question should awaken hostility or mistrust. In time of peace the privilege (of free passage) could in no way prejudicially affect Turkish interests, and in time of war the right would become a fiction. Russia and Turkey have shed more blood than was necessary. The time has arrived when it should be understood that sincere friendship on a basis of real interests will be of more avail than vain reminiscences of past hostility."

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 392.

Sir E. Egerton to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, October 17, 1908.

F.O. 36096/31738/08/44A.

D. 1.22 P.M.

Tel. (No. 50.)

R. 3.55 P.M.

Italian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] considers essential that the Powers should put immediate pressure on Turkish Government to accept Conference.⁽¹⁾

He complained of premature publication of London arrangement by the French Press.

MINUTE.

I have already told the Italian Ambassador that I have not yet had any reply from the Turkish Gov[ernment] as to suggested programme and can take no further step meanwhile.

No action need be taken on this.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [For Signor Tittoni's views on the conference v. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 210-6.]

No. 393.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 19, 1908.

F.O. 36100/31738/08/44A.

D. 12.50 A.M.

Tel. (No. 55.) R.

R. 7 A.M.

I communicated substance of your telegram No. 147⁽¹⁾ yesterday evening to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, and saw him this morning.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. Baron von Aehrenthal's views on October 16 are described in G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 183-4.]

[16789]

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His Excellency informed me that he had already made representations at Sophia in the sense desired, and that he had just received reply stating that Bulgarian Government formally declare that they will take no military measures, and that when the twenty-five days for which the reservists have been now called in have expired, reservists in question will be (group omitted: ? dismissed), and no more will be called in. Bulgarian Government, however, make it a condition that the Turkish army do not mobilize, and that no essential increase is made to its actual strength. (End of R.)

Minister for Foreign Affairs has communicated above to the Turkish Government, warning them to stop military measures. His Excellency considers Bulgarian declaration reassuring, though he expressed some anxiety as to how far military measures have already been taken in Turkey, and will affect it.

He expressed opinion that the boycott movement, which he knew had been engineered by Ottoman Government, would end very shortly, and he had advised Austrian shipping not to leave ports or interrupt sailings to Turkey.

He declined to say anything about the Conference, but said that any Power or Powers who held out vague hopes to the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs of compensation, to which neither Austria-Hungary nor Turkey could consent, or who represented Austria-Hungary as the sole obstacle to compensation, would incur a very grave responsibility.

Repeated to Paris (No. 215), Berlin (No. 154), Vienna (No. 156), Rome (No. 157), St. Petersburg (No. 516), Constantinople (No. 378), Sofia (No. 95), Bucharest (No. 15), Belgrade (No. 24). October 19, 1908.

No. 394.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. Russia 181/918.⁽¹⁾

(No. 319.) Secret.

Sir,

Foreign Office, D. October 19, 1908.

R. October 31, 1908.

I transmit to Your Excellency herewith a copy of a memorandum⁽²⁾ which I gave to M. Isvolsky to read setting forth what the Cabinet had authorised me to say to him about the Straits.

After reading it, he said he looked upon it as a carefully considered decision, and although it did not give all he had hoped for, he would accept it.

I told him that the Turkish Government were most anxious not to have the question raised now. The Turkish Ambassador had of himself quite spontaneously developed the same arguments as to inopportuneness which I had used.

I had impressed upon the Turks that some opening of the Straits was essential, in the long run, to good relations between Turkey and Russia, and that I believed Russia desired good relations.

It would even be possible for me, at a suitable moment later on, to advise that the Turks should consider an agreement with Russia on the lines which had been indicated. But I could not do this now, when the Turks themselves had pleaded that, though they might be willing to consider the opening of the Straits later on, they ought not to be pressed at the present time.

I assured M. Isvolsky of my own personal desire to get the question settled; because I felt it was essential to the maintenance of good relations between Russia and Turkey and between Russia and us. But the time for a settlement must be chosen carefully.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [The text is taken from the Embassy archives; there is a rough draft in F.O. 35992/31738/08/44. This is endorsed "*App[roved]. E.R.*"]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 441, No. 377.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Egerton.

F.O. 36691/31738/08/44.

(No. 141.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 19, 1908.

The Italian Ambassador informed me to-day that Signor Tittoni did not see how territorial compensation was to be obtained for Servia and Montenegro. We had made it a condition that it should not come out of Turkish territory; and Austria would refuse to allow it to come from her territory, even to the point of making it a *casus belli*. In these circumstances, Signor Tittoni wished to know what we intended to do.

I said we could deal with this difficulty when the time came. I presumed that Italy did not object to the compensation coming from territory seized by Austria, and I thought we might wait till Austria raised objections. It was certain that both Turkey and Austria would make some objections to the draft programme, and we should have to deal with these objections when they arose.

The Ambassador told me that Signor Tittoni observed, with regard to the proposal of giving up the Capitulations and the Post Offices, that he thought this should be regarded rather as a tendency for the future, when Turkey had organised a satisfactory administration and Post Office system of her own. We ought to be very careful not to abandon our rights prematurely, when there might still be a necessity to claim them again. The Ambassador said he considered I had explained myself in this sense; he hardly thought it necessary to raise the point.

I remarked that it was a point which I agreed should be borne carefully in mind.

The Ambassador inquired as to Turkey's consent to the programme.

I told him I heard there might be a difficulty in connection with Crete.

The Ambassador said that this question of Crete was an *impasse*. Turkey was very reluctant to agree to annexation to Greece, but till this took place there would be no peace. He thought our object ought to be to get Turkey to agree to annexation on proper terms.

The Ambassador also informed me that Italy had made at Sofia the representation we had suggested, asking Bulgaria to abstain from military action.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 36528/31738/08/44.

(No. 60.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 19, 1908.

The Bulgarian Chargé d'Affaires called here this morning and stated that he was officially authorised by his Government to assure me in the most positive and categorical manner that Bulgaria will take every step that is possible to avoid a war with Turkey. In no case would Bulgaria provoke war, but she would defend herself if she were attacked.

He proceeded further to state officially that the reason why Bulgaria had decided to proclaim her independence was her desire to remove all the obstacles which were likely to prevent her maintaining the best and closest relations with Turkey.

Bulgaria warmly desired the consolidation of the new régime in Turkey, and, if peace was maintained, future events would show that she would do all in her power to achieve this end. The Bulgarian Government realized that this policy would correspond to the desire and policy of His Majesty's Government, and they were unable to understand the attitude of the English press, which seemed inclined to judge wrongly and to misinterpret the desires and tendency of the Bulgarian Government.

Sir C. Hardinge thanked Monsieur Dobreff for his communication as to the attitude and intentions of his Government, which would give His Majesty's Government satisfaction. The attitude of British public opinion was to be explained very easily. Bulgaria had always been particularly favoured by Great Britain, and Great Britain was the only Power who gave friendly countenance to Bulgaria at the time of the union with Eastern Roumelia. As long as Bulgaria had been the aggrieved party, she had always received the support of the British Government, but the situation had now been reversed, and it was Turkey—who was in the throes of regeneration—who had received a grievous blow from Bulgaria in the declaration of her independence. It was hardly necessary to remind him that the new régime was only three months old, and its existence had been greatly endangered by two such severe blows as the declaration of independence and the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. These blows, if Bulgaria was really in favour of the new régime in Turkey, had certainly been ill-timed. The attitude of the English Press towards Austria had been far more bitter than its attitude towards Bulgaria. The explanation of this was to be found in the fact that Bulgaria was not, like Austria, a signatory of the Berlin Treaty, consequently, from an international point of view, the offence of Austria was greater than that of Bulgaria.

Sir C. Hardinge also told him, in reply to observations which he made on Turkish military preparations, that His Majesty's Government were well aware that certain precautionary measures had been taken by the Turkish Government, but that his own Government must not lose sight of the fact that they had under arms at the present moment about fifty thousand men more than their normal peace establishment. This being so, the Bulgarian Government had no right to take such exception to certain measures carried out on the frontier by the Turkish Government, who had mobilized certainly a smaller number of men than the additional contingents now with the colours in Bulgaria. Sir C. Hardinge added that he felt authorized to urge that the Bulgarian Government should be exceedingly circumspect in their action, and give no provocation. If such were their attitude it would certainly be reciprocated by the Turkish Government, who, His Majesty's Government were convinced, had no aggressive designs against Bulgaria at the present time.

The Bulgarian Chargé d'Affaires gave details of an attack on a Bulgarian village in Macedonia, near Serres, in which some Bulgarians had been killed by Greeks and Vlachs. He was told that I should wait to obtain confirmation of this from His Majesty's Vice-Consuls.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 397.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 36647/31738/08/44.

(No. 158.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. October 19, 1908.

R. October 22, 1908.

I have the honour to report that The Emperor of Austria was pleased to grant me a private audience for the purpose of receiving from me The King's letter containing His reply to the letter by which The Emperor had notified to His Majesty

His intention to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina and withdraw His troops from the Sandjak of Novi Bazar.

The Emperor was pleased to receive me in the most gracious manner, and asked me to sit down while He read the letter. This His Majesty did twice, and then, turning to me, said, "I see from this letter that His Majesty is not at all pleased. I am very, very sorry for it—but really annexation was inevitable, and had to take place." His Majesty added that public opinion in England seemed generally very severe towards Austria-Hungary, and that He had been told that one of the chief reasons for this severity was that His action was likely to compromise the success of the Constitutional movement in Turkey. He gathered this also from the allusion to Turkey in The King's letter. I told him that in England there certainly existed a very strong current of sympathy for the Young Turk party in their endeavours to bring about a better state of things in their country, and that the fear lest the loss of territory involved by His decision, together with the almost simultaneous declaration of Bulgarian independence, should prove to be a weapon in the hands of the opponents of the movement, had doubtless contributed very much to the feeling in England to which He had alluded. His Majesty said that there seemed an almost universal belief that the annexation of the Provinces and the Bulgarian Declaration of Independence were intimately connected. He could, however, assure me that there was no such connection. Neither He nor His Government had had the slightest idea that the Bulgarian Government were going to act so quickly, and Prince Ferdinand during his stay at Budapest had not made the slightest allusion to his plans in this respect either to Him or to His Ministers. He had had many conversations with him, but not one word had escaped from the Prince's lips with regard either to the independence of Bulgaria or its elevation to a Kingdom.

His Majesty referred in conversation to the Conference, and said, "What is the meaning of these two programmes? Which is authentic?"

Bearing in mind that Baron d'Aehrenthal had not wished, for obvious reasons, to discuss the matter, I judged it prudent to reply that I was just as much in the dark as His Majesty. The conversation then turned to the subject of the Press, which he considered did a great deal of harm. On my agreeing with Him that the newspapers nowadays rendered the task of diplomatists very difficult, His Majesty said, "Yes! But it is not entirely the fault of the Press, as far too much is told to them by the diplomatists themselves!"

His Majesty said that He hoped that the news from Bulgaria was as good as it looked—He would be more sanguine if the Turkish Government had not already half mobilised their army. "Heaven knows why they have done so—they should have followed My example and remained quiet. Servia threatens all sorts of things—but I have taken no military measures whatever—and I do not intend to do so unless insult gives place to direct aggression. I know that in the present state of affairs My abstention from all special military preparations is dangerous. But I have preferred to run the risk rather than to take measures which might cause excitement or offer a pretext for aggression."

In making this statement His Majesty probably meant that no important military measures had been taken, such as would require His own consent and that of Parliament. The measures which I have reported are, I presume, ordinary steps of precaution which it is in the power of the Minister of War to take on his own authority without obtaining the permission of the Crown or Legislature.

The Emperor closed the audience with cordial enquiries as to the health of The King and a few gracious remarks as to my forthcoming departure from Vienna.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 398.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. MacDonald.

F.O. 36582/36582/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 20, 1908.

Tel. (No. 51.)

D. 9 P.M.

I have informed Japanese Chargé d'Affaires that during visit of Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs nothing connected with the Far East was mentioned. We discussed details of the working of the Anglo-Russian Convention respecting Persia and Afghanistan, but our time was almost entirely taken up with the crisis in the Near East.

If asked about the question of opening of Dardanelles you may say that we are not opposed in principle to the opening, but that nothing was settled.

III. THE PROGRESS OF THE AUSTRO-SERVIAN DISPUTE, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 1908.

No. 399.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, October 21, 1908.

F.O. 36637/31738/08/44A.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 16.)

R. 10 P.M.

I saw M. Pashitch, ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday. He is to start for St. Petersburg in a few days to submit Serbia's claims to compensation, but does not himself favour this policy.⁽¹⁾ In his opinion, only solution of Bosnian question which would fully satisfy Serbia would be a form of autonomy sufficient to remove all fear of denationalization. Serbia would also remain quiet if the Powers simply refused to recognize annexation and claimed the continuance of the *status quo*, but if the Conference meets and confirms the annexation without granting Serbia territorial compensation, result would be a complete triumph for Austria, both over Serbia and the Signatory Powers of Berlin Treaty, and Serbia would have no alternative but an appeal to the sword. He intended to remind Russian Government that, when he was Minister at St. Petersburg, he had received from late Emperor of Russia His Majesty's personal promise that Russia would never allow annexation of occupied provinces by Austria.

I pointed out fatal results which an armed conflict with Austria-Hungary would have for Serbia, but he replied that although the country might suffer materially this sacrifice would be a moral gain to the nation. He admitted that frontier towns would fall at once, but said that Serbia could hold out in the interior for two years, and he counted on disaffection of Slavs in the Austrian army, on a rising in the occupied provinces, and on popular sympathy in Russia.

I hear similar views from other Servians also, and although it is generally stated that Serbia will await decisions of the Conference, I am afraid that situation is not without danger, as provocation may at any moment be given on either side which may precipitate hostilities.

⁽¹⁾ [A somewhat different view of his opinions was reported by the German Ambassador from St. Petersburg on November 13. *G.P.* XXVI, I, pp. 268-70.]

MINUTES.

So long as Russia does not feel obliged to join in, a war between Austria and Servia would not greatly affect us and might injure Austrian trade in the Balkans to our advantage. We could not feel much sympathy for Austria. Nevertheless I suppose we should endeavour to prevent such a war and could only do so—if at all—by some very strong statement to the Servians.

J. A. C. T.

R. P. M.

The Skupchina voted against war the other day and I think this is mere bluff: In a week or two, the winter will prevent fighting or make it very much more difficult.

No action.

L. M.

C. H.

It is possible, though not likely, that Servia might act as M. Pashitch says, but Servians are sure to talk in this strain for some time to come. We have already advised them once to restrain themselves.

E. G.

No. 400.

Memorandum respecting Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin.

F.O. 36795/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 21, 1908.

Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin consists mainly of the imposition of certain servitudes on Montenegro in favour of Austria-Hungary, and of the incorporation in Dalmatia of Spizza, which was part of what was regarded as Albania.

Looked at merely geographically, the cession of Spizza by Austria-Hungary would be the easiest territorial compensation which Austria-Hungary, if inclined to act liberally, could make to Montenegro; and on this point Monsieur d'Aerenthal has used language in the Delegations which may be interpreted in a favourable sense. Probably, however, he was at the moment alluding only to the above-mentioned servitudes.

Further to the north, on the Dalmatian coast, are what used to be called the Turkish enclaves of the Suttarina and Klek; *i.e.*, two districts where narrow slips of Herzegovina territory project themselves on to the Dalmatian sea-coast and cut Dalmatian territory asunder.

Of these two so-called enclaves, the Suttarina is worth noticing. It does not reach the Adriatic itself, but faces the Bocche de Cattaro, not far from Castel Nuovo. Some rearrangement of territory favourable to Montenegro would be feasible here. But it would necessitate a further cession of Dalmatian territory also in order to be worth anything to Montenegro; and although the total cession would not in itself be really considerable, it is likely that Austria-Hungary would make difficulties, unless she had made up her mind to win the good-will of the Prince of Montenegro by some act of real or apparent generosity.

Any compensation of territory further to the south besides Spizza would have to be at the expense of Turkey (Albania), and we should have the Dulcigno business of 1880-81 over again, which is not an alluring prospect.

I may mention that Sir Robert Morier wrote an elaborate Report on Klek and the Suttarina many years ago, which is doubtless in this Office.

What the Servians want is the Kossovopolye, or at least part of it, *i.e.*, the district south of Mitrovitz, to a point a little north of Kachanik. They want it firstly on practical grounds, in order to improve their frontier, and for reasons connected with roads and railways; secondly, because it contains the so-called Amselfeld, or Field of Sparrows, where Servia lost her independence in 1389 and the united Christian armies were destroyed in 1448 just before the fall of Constantinople, which was thereby made certain. An appeal to the Battle of Kossovo invariably excites the Servian imagination,

One great difficulty in the way of securing this district, which may be described as the south-eastern portion of the Vilayet of Kossovo, for Serbia is that the population of a large portion of this district has become Arnaut in character, even if originally it was wholly Servian: a subject on which there have been endless controversies. The cession of this district to Serbia, would probably be met with resistance by the Albanians; they would also resist the cession of the north-western part of the Vilayet to Montenegro, which would very much like to have it. (I refer to Kieppert's Ethnographic map, which can be trusted where Germans are not concerned.) The Turks would also object, as they consider the whole Vilayet of Kossovo to be Turkish territory, including Novi-Bazar. The latter was certainly part of Bosnia at the time of the Treaty of Berlin, when it was dealt with in a special manner by Article 29, as a reference to that Article will show. Since the Treaty of Berlin however the civil administration has apparently been tacked on to that of the Vilayet of Kossovo properly so-called.

The only feasible territorial cession of which I can think is a rectification of the boundaries of Serbia and Bulgaria on the Timok, near Bregovo, where a small frontier dispute took place some years ago which at one time looked dangerous. The boundary, so far as it follows the thalweg of the Timok, might be carried up to the division of the waters in the hills which separate the waters which flow into the Timok from those which flow into the Danube, and from the last spur of the hills to the Danube at Novo-selo, or Florentin. This could be enforced without difficulty. The Bulgarians might not like it, especially as it would bring the Servian frontier nearer to Widin, but it would not really injure them.

I do not however consider any of these suggestions very hopeful.

F[ITZMAURICE].

No. 401.

Sir E. Egerton to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, October 22, 1908.

F.O. 36755/31738/08/44A.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 55.) Confidential.

R. 9.30 P.M.

My telegram No. 54 of to-day.⁽¹⁾

Russian Ambassador has telegraphed, for the information of his Government and of M. Isvolsky at Berlin, that Italian Government holds to early convocation of Conference, even if direct understandings should have taken place between Austria and Bulgaria and Turkey, which the Conference may confirm:

This decision is based on the following categories of arguments:—

1. Principle of inviolability of Treaties without the assent of the Signatory Powers and prestige of European Concert.
2. Deference to the Anglo-French initiative, and danger of pushing matters to an extreme by preventing or rendering useless the joint action of the interested parties by separate understanding of the culprits.
3. The actual interest of Austria and Turkey themselves, whose understanding might not be recognized or be passed in silence by the other Signatory Powers, which would compromise or destroy its value.
4. The special interest of Triple Alliance, the importance and practical value of which would be seriously shaken and diminished if, in a situation as serious as the Balkan crisis, two allies, Austria and Germany, disregarded the plain opinion and the decided attitude of the third party, Italy, in favour of the Conference.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [For Count Metternich's report of Italian views, *v. G.P. XXVI, I, p. 214.*]

MINUTES.

This seems to verge on nonsense.

J. A. C. T.

It is rather involved but the meaning is tolerably clear.

R. P. M.

The Italians fear that Montenegro will drop out.

L. M.

C. H.

Yes; that is what it all means but the revision of Article 29 could be obtained without a Conference and the Italians can easily make it the price of their recognition of what Austria and Bulgaria have done; for I think we must stand out for the right to countersign any change in the Treaty of Berlin, even if made by Austria and Bulgaria with Turkey's consent.

E. G.

No. 402.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Louther.

F.O. 36886/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 24, 1908.

Tel. (No. 403.)

D. 5:30 P.M.

We have no desire to put obstacles in the way of a direct arrangement between Austria and Turkey, and if Austria ever make an arrangement satisfactory to Turkey I do not anticipate any difficulty in its being recognized by the Powers. But the difficulty of conciliating Turkish public opinion is one which Austria has herself created by her arbitrary procedure. It is therefore not for us to advise Turkey to condone what has been done but for Austria to smooth the path by offering what terms she can to make the agreement she desires attractive to Turkish opinion.

Repeated to Vienna, (No. 164), October 24, 1908.

No. 403.

Sir C. MacDonald to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 40633/36582/08/44A.

(No. 280.)

Tôkiô, D. October 25, 1908.

Sir,

R. November 21, 1908.

On the 21st inst[ant] I received your telegram⁽¹⁾ stating that His Majesty's Government would not in principle object to the opening of the Dardanelles and that if I were approached on the subject by the Japanese Government I might reply to this effect, adding, however, that nothing had been definitely settled.

Some days previous to the receipt of this telegram, in an informal conversation I had with the Foreign Minister, the latter introduced the subject of the troubles in the Balkan Peninsula and stated that this was a matter which did not affect the Far East, but there was one phase of it which was of the greatest interest to the Japanese Government, namely the opening of the Dardanelles. His Excellency went on to say that if the Dardanelles were opened to the passage of Russian warships from the Black Sea Russia would possess a Naval Base some five or six thousand miles nearer to Japan than those she had at present. It was well known that Russia was straining every nerve to build up a new Navy, and the establishment of a Naval Base so much nearer to Japan could not be otherwise than one of considerable concern to the Japanese Government. His Excellency reminded me that, had the Black Sea Fleet been in a position to join that of Admiral Rojdestvensky, the consequences might have been very serious for Japan. The attitude taken up during the war by His Majesty's Government in respect to this question of the Opening of the Dardanelles

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 460, No. 398.]

and the assurances given by Lord Lansdowne to the Japanese Minister in London previous to the outbreak of the war, had been a source of the greatest satisfaction to the Japanese Government and would always be remembered with sincere gratitude by Japan.

I said I had received no information or instructions regarding the negotiations which I saw in the Press were proceeding between Sir Edward Grey and Mr. Iswolsky, doubtless because they only concerned matters relative to the Near East. Count Komura replied that this was without doubt the case and added that the Japanese Government were most anxious not to embarrass the British Government in any way, but the importance of this matter to Japan might be overlooked in case the question came up.

It is not likely that I shall be again approached by Count Komura on this subject for some time at any rate. I propose, if possible, to avoid the subject altogether until I get further instructions from you in the matter.

This change in policy by His Majesty's Government will of course be a great disappointment to the Japanese Government and the Japanese people, but the former will recognize that the larger and directer questions affecting the Near East must take precedence of one which affects the Far East, and that in a somewhat indirect manner.

I have, &c.

CLAUDE M. MacDONALD.

No. 404.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Therapia, October 26, 1908.

F.O. 37298/31738/08/44.

D. 8.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 365.) Secret.

R. 10.30 P.M.

Grand Vizier has asked me to submit, for your opinion, following plan which he has in his mind, and which he does not wish should be known to Turkish Embassy in London:—

Bosnian question to be excluded from Conference.

Bosnia and Herzegovina afterwards to be created into an independent Principality, governed by a Protestant Prince belonging to some neutral State, selected by the Powers and facilitated by Turkey.

This Principality would be endowed with a Constitution, Austria having expressed her intention of granting one to the provinces.

His Highness also proposes to make an offensive and defensive alliance with Serbia, and has apparently begun negotiations on these lines with M. Novakovich, who is here.

His Highness would make a similar arrangement with Montenegro, and has already to-day broached question with Montenegrin Chargé d'Affaires here.

Finally, after recognition of Bulgarian independence, it might be possible to consider question of making similar arrangement with her.

I pointed out that this scheme would be likely to meet with the determined opposition of Austria and her ally, but His Highness said he hoped he could count on support of Russia, Great Britain, France and Italy in favour of it.

In setting forth above scheme, his Highness repeatedly stated that he set high value on your opinion and advice in the matter.

No. 405.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 37301/31738/08/44A.

Belgrade, D. October 26, 1908 11:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 19.)

R. October 27, 1908, 7 A.M.

The Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs read me to-day a telegram from Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, now at Berlin, recording his conversations with M. Isvolsky. The latter, while cautioning Serbia to remain quiet for the present, seems to have given his Excellency the greatest encouragement, both as regards territorial compensation and the demand for the integrity and autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He also read me a long telegram from Servian Special Envoy at Constantinople, recording his first interview with Grand Vizier. The latter stated that Turkey refused to negotiate at all with Austro-Hungary, and would limit her negotiations with Bulgaria to the railway question.

His Highness desired that there should be two Conferences, the first to bring about a financial settlement with Bulgaria, the second to meet subsequently and deal with Bosnia and Herzegovina. His idea with regard to the latter question was that the two provinces should be formed into a complete autonomous Principality under the suzerainty of the Sultan, ruled over by a Prince chosen by the Powers.

This proposal entirely meets the views of Serbia, and the Secretary-General spoke optimistically of a possible coalition of the Balkan States, including even Bulgaria, which would form an effective barrier to Austrian advance. He also told me confidentially that the Grand Vizier had proposed a military Convention or defensive alliance between Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro, on condition that neither of latter States should be allowed to declare war without the consent of Turkey.

The Crown Prince started for St. Petersburg this morning with the ex-Prime Minister via Vienna and Warsaw. The journey (? was his) suggestion, but was promptly acceded to by the Emperor of Russia. His Royal Highness bears an autograph letter from the King of Serbia.

No. 406.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 37601/31738/08/44.

(No. 448.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 26, 1908.

On the 24th the Turkish Ambassador made to me confidentially the following communication, on which his Government wished to have my observations:—

The Turkish Government placed more confidence in us than in other Powers, and would certainly not come to any decision about the present questions without taking my advice.

There had been no negotiations between Turkey and Austria-Hungary. The Austrian Ambassador came to the Porte almost every day, to urge that Turkey should accept what had been done: but the Turkish Government of course refused this request, and renewed their protest. . . .⁽¹⁾

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [The rest of this despatch refers to Turkish negotiations with Bulgaria, and is unimportant.]

No. 407.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 37547/31738/08/44.

(No. 123.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 26, 1908.

I told Count Mensdorff to-day that it was quite untrue that we had opposed direct negotiations between Austria and Turkey.

I did not know what proposals Austria might wish to make, but I had from the beginning told the Turkish Ambassador that it was for Turkey to take into consideration any proposals which Austria did make, and to decide for herself whether they were satisfactory or not. I had also told the Turkish Ambassador that we should be very glad if the proposals were acceptable to Turkey.

Count Mensdorff said he wished we could encourage Turkey to come to a direct arrangement with Austria.

I replied that we could not encourage Turkey without knowing what proposals Austria was making. We should be delighted if Turkey said the proposals were satisfactory; but we could certainly not put pressure upon Turkey to accept any arrangement which she regarded as unsatisfactory.

Count Mensdorff argued that Austria had been obliged to take over Bosnia and Herzegovina, as otherwise they would have demanded to send representatives to the Turkish Parliament. Austria could not give the two Provinces a Constitution unless she had the sovereignty over them. She had given back the Sandjak: which Turkey never expected to recover, and Turkey had really not lost anything.

I told him that if this was the case then it was all the more reason for consulting Turkey beforehand.

Count Mensdorff said the difficulty about this was that Turkey would probably have refused, and it would have been exceedingly difficult for Austria to *passer outre* and to carry out her plan after the refusal.

I answered that the Austrian position seemed somewhat like this. One partner had done something without consulting the other partner about it, because he knew that the other partner would object to it; then, having done it, the first partner turned to the other and said, "Please do not mind after all."

Count Mensdorff then asked me whether I knew what proposal Turkey would regard as satisfactory. It was rather difficult for Austria to pay anything, considering how much she had already had to spend on the Provinces during the last thirty years.

I told him that I had not asked the Turkish Government, and they had not told me, what they would consider satisfactory. It had not occurred to me that I should be acceptable as a go-between, and therefore I had not enquired into the point, and had left it for settlement by direct negotiations between Austria and Turkey.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 408.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Salis.

F.O. 37545/31738/08/44.

(No. 296.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 26, 1908.

I reminded Count Metternich to-day that I had told him originally that I did not wish the discussion of Near Eastern affairs to lead to the formation of two

opposing camps. I thought it well, therefore, to tell him that there was no truth whatever in the report that we had opposed direct negotiations between Austria and Turkey at Constantinople.

So far as I knew, Austria had not done more than ask Turkey to waive her protest and condone what had been done. It did not seem to me that this was a proposal any friend could urge Turkey to accept. But in conversation with the Turkish Ambassador I had said that it was for Turkey to take into consideration any proposals which Austria made, and to form her own opinion as to whether they were satisfactory. Any arrangement come to between Austria and Turkey direct would of course have to be countersigned in some way by the other parties to the Treaty of Berlin. With regard to this I was under the impression, which Count Metternich again confirmed, that Austria would not object on the point of form.

Count Metternich seemed to think it a pity that we had not denied the rumour of our opposition to direct negotiations at Constantinople.—For years past, rumours detrimental to the German Government had been circulated. Just lately it had been reported that Baron Marschall was urging Turkey to go to war with Bulgaria. The German Government had therefore published his despatch denying any such action on his part. Had this not been done, the rumour might have run on for weeks, and would have done harm.

As he seemed to think it unfortunate that we did not take the same course, I told him that when rumours so baseless were spread about our actions I was much more inclined to resent them than to deny them.

Count Metternich expressed some disappointment that I had not gone further in urging Turkey to come to a direct arrangement with Austria.

I replied it had been suggested to us from an Austrian source that, as it was very unpopular in Turkey to condone what Austria had done, the difficulty might be overcome if Turkey agreed "on the advice of one of the Great Powers" to agree to the recent changes. For our own part, we could certainly not give Turkey any such advice; it would merely be taking upon ourselves the odium for what had been done by Austria, without gaining any advantage for Turkey. It was for Austria to get over this difficulty, which she herself had created, by offering such inducements to Turkey as she thought fit. I had, however, said to the Turkish Ambassador that it would be welcome news to us if Turkey could say that Austria had made proposals which Turkey thought satisfactory, and which she felt she could accept.

Count Metternich asked me what sort of inducement I thought Austria could offer.

I told him that the Turkish Government had given me no indication of what Austria proposed to offer, and as we did not know whether Austria was prepared to offer any thing I did not think it was for us to find out. This matter of an inducement was exactly the kind of thing which Austria could find out for herself by direct negotiations with Turkey.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following private letters by King Edward and Sir E. Grey throw light on the British attitude to M. Isvolski at this time.]

(a.)

King Edward to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Buckingham Palace, October 27, 1908.

Please take an early opportunity of asking for an audience of the Emperor and presenting in person the enclosed autograph letter from me to him. I have endeavoured in this letter to sing to the utmost my praises of Isvolsky and the great personal regard I entertain towards him.

Believe me,

Very sincerely yours,

EDWARD R. & I.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

⁽²⁾ [For this attempt to support M. Isvolski, v. Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, pp. 639-42. The text of the autograph letter to the Czar is printed *ib.* p. 642. The Czar's reply was not found by Sir Sidney Lee nor is it in the Foreign Office Archives.]

(b.)

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

October 26, 1908.

I think Isvolsky departed believing in our good faith and good-will. At our first interview he spoke with great freedom, being much concerned to explain his own position as regards d'Aehrenthal's coup. As long as he was speaking himself his anxiety to impress upon me his own position and proposals made the atmosphere quite fresh and easy; but directly I began to talk to him his eyes became very dull and defensive. After the second day this wore off, and we really talked with freedom and confidence.

The question of the Straits was difficult; but his suggestion that in time of war equal facilities might be given by Turkey to each belligerent, on the ground that this was a necessary condition of her neutrality, made it possible for me to give and for him to accept the Memorandum, a copy of which is being sent to you. In giving it, which I did as a Memorandum of conversation, I used some words of my own, which he asked me to put in a private [*sic*] to him; he said this would carry weight with the Emperor. I agreed to this, as all that I said, though limited to an expression of my own view, was within the limits which the Cabinet had laid down.

I believe that good relations between Turkey and Russia are possible, that events will develop this tendency, and that some arrangement about the Straits is necessary to promote them, and by promoting them would—under proper safeguards—strengthen Turkey's position. But I cannot advocate this view at Constantinople while Turkey is so sensitive and suspicious. If Russia helps to pull Turkey through her present difficulties, an arrangement about the Straits may be received with more confidence by Turkey later on.

Morley and I spoke very frankly to Isvolsky and Benckendorff about the bad effect upon public opinion here of the proceedings of Liakhoff and Russian Officers in Persia; it is a great satisfaction to me that the threatened incursion of Russian troops to Tabriz was stopped. My telegrams will have explained what I felt about this.

I am not at all wedded to a Conference about the Near East if any other solution is easier later on, and acceptable to France and Russia. But even if Bulgaria and

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

Austria make arrangements which satisfy Turkey, they must somehow be counter-signed by the Powers in so far as they alter the Treaty of Berlin.

Isvolsky was looking forward to his speech in the Duma, and congratulating himself on the opportunity of making it. I hope he will be equally well satisfied after it is over. I am sure the result of his visit to London has been most favourable to good relations with Russia.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

No. 410.

Count de Salis to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, October 27, 1908.

F.O. 37430/31738/08/44A.

D. 2.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 59.)

R. 4.15 P.M.

I understand privately from the Russian Embassy that the following embodies the result of the Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffair]'s negotiations here.

Germany would accept programme of 9 points drawn up at London,⁽¹⁾ but makes the following reservations.

Article 1. Independence of Bulgaria should be subordinated to settlement of question of Railway.

Article 2. Annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina should be considered indiscutable "fait accompli."

Article 6. Germany agrees to abrogation of Article 29 of Berlin Treaty in as far as assent of Austria-Hungary be obtained to it.

Article 7. Germany only consents to such advantages for Servia and Montenegro as may be agreed to by Austria-Hungary.

The other points are accepted subject to examination of their terms and definition of their details. The German Government are anxious to avoid exercising any pressure on Austria-Hungary, but will make every effort towards a just and practical solution.

Repeated to St. Petersburg, (No. 550) October 27, 1908.

MINUTES.

Possibly the nine points may not have to be considered at all.

J. A. C. T.
R. P. M.

This is very satisfactory on the whole.

L. M.
C. H.

Count Benckendorff showed me a similar communication this afternoon.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 453-4, No. 390.]

No. 411.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 37549/31738/08/44.

(No. 337.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 27, 1908.

Count Benckendorff showed me to-day, in confidence, the report he had received of what the German Government had said to M. Iswolsky.

He considered it very cold and unsatisfactory. The German Government accepted the principle of a Conference, and agreed to some items in the programme, such as

the recognition of the independence of Bulgaria subject to the settlement of the Railway question. But they regarded the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as accomplished, and "indiscutable." Count Benckendorff did not at all like this word.

I told him that I thought this word meant only that Germany supported Austria in the view that the Conference should meet only to ratify the annexation, not to discuss it. Whether we could agree to this view would depend upon whether Turkey could be satisfied. If, however, Turkey could be satisfied, then there would be no difficulty in getting Austria and Germany to include the question of annexation in the programme. Count Benckendorff's report further said that on other points, such as that of advantages for Servia and Montenegro, the German Government agreed, subject to the condition that nothing should be proposed to which Austria could not adhere. Generally, the German Government expressed the opinion that they would work for peace, though they could not put pressure upon Austria to make concessions. This was very vague, but I did not regard it as unsatisfactory. It must be remembered that the German Government were in a position of considerable embarrassment, and therefore their language would naturally be cautious.

I told Count Benckendorff that I wished to support the line which Russia might take with regard to Servia.

He asked me to let him know the result of my interview with the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 412.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

October 27, 1908.

I have not, myself, much sympathy with the clamour of Servia and Montenegro for territorial compensation. If they are afraid of the Austrian advance, they had better sit still, put their own houses in order, make friends with Turkey, and hope that she will get strong under the new regime.

But I do not want to cold-shoulder Isvolsky on the Servian question, if the Russians are keen about it, and I will do my best to support him.

For the moment, I am taking the line that we must first see how the difficulties of Austria with Turkey, and Bulgaria with Turkey can be got over; and that when that bit, which is the larger half of the road, is accomplished, we can go into what remains.

It will, however, be useful to me to know how far Isvolsky means to go in support of Servia, if he has definite ideas on the subject and if you can ascertain what they are.

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

No. 413.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, October 28, 1908.

F.O. 37553/31738/08/44A.

D. 7.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 64.) R.

R. 8.45 P.M.

Following is substance of Minister for Foreign Affairs' latest declaration respecting Conference :—

Austria-Hungary is determined, if it is made possible for them, to carry out Conference idea, as they desire to terminate crisis. Therefore they do not insist that Bosnia should be excluded from programme. Whilst they could not allow annexation to be called in question or made subject of discussion, they do not object to Conference taking act of it and noting abrogation of Article dealing with provinces and sanjak in general revision of Treaty.

As regards compensations, he says that Turkey has been already compensated, and that of any other territorial compensation in any other direction there can be no question whatever.

Repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 552), Berlin (No. 160), Constantinople (No. 414) October 29, 1908.

No. 414.

*Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, October 28, 1908.

I am very much obliged to you for your letter of October 21st. I will deal with the questions it contains in the order in which they appear.

I am very glad to hear from you that it does not follow that Stolypin would resign if Isvolsky were to fall. The latter certainly implied that here as a practical certainty. It is perfectly evident that Isvolsky will be seriously attacked when he returns to Russia, and I shall be very interested to see whether he is sufficiently adroit in his speech in the Duma to extricate himself from the attacks that will be made upon him by the Pan-Slavists. I hear that he has been weeping at Berlin in the arms of the Austrian Ambassador, and pointing out how his position has been jeopardised by Aehrenthal. I think he must be satisfied with what we have done to strengthen his position with the Emperor. The private letter which Grey gave to him about the Dardanelles is of the most generous character, and I have reason to believe that The King is also writing privately to the Emperor to say what a favourable impression Isvolsky made upon him here. This latter point is very confidential.

I hardly know what to tell you about the Balkan crisis. We are endeavouring to give the Turks good advice, and are advocating agreements with Austria and Bulgaria, if they should prove acceptable to Turkey, before the meeting of the Conference, as this would be so much time gained. On the other hand, the Turks are like children. They put forth the most extraordinary proposals—each more impossible than its predecessor. They do this in secrecy, without the knowledge of their Ambassador in London, and their proposals contain neither sense nor logic. I suppose it will work out all right in the end, but they do not seem to see that it is absolutely essential that the question of Bosnia should come before the Conference—otherwise they will never obtain the legalisation of the retrocession of Austrian rights in the Sandjak, and Austria would, without this, have the right to send back

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

her troops whenever she chooses. I have little doubt that Bulgaria will come to terms with Turkey; it is only a question of amount that is at issue. Prince Ferdinand is every day more peaceful, while the Turks are every day more prepared and more likely to prevent any initial success by the Bulgarians. Fortunately, also, the season of the year is in favour of peace, as snow must shortly fall in the Balkans and render military operations impossible. I think we shall have a breathing space for about a fortnight now, before further developments occur.

Tcharykoff's allusions as to what passed secretly at the Congress of Berlin mystify us very considerably. We are perfectly well aware that the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was proposed by Lord Salisbury and Lord Beaconsfield, and it was then considered to be to the advantage of Turkey that the occupation should take place, in order to interpose a barrier between the two Slav States. If it is this to which Monsieur Tcharykoff makes allusion, the only answer is that the present attitude of England in this question is a further example of how British policy has changed during the last three years, in consequence of our agreement with Russia. If it is *not* this to which he refers, you might mention to Tcharykoff that we do not know what it is, and that we should very much like to be informed.

I hear privately from Bertie in Paris that Isvolsky made a very foolish suggestion to Pichon. He suggested that we should give up Cyprus, saying that the reasons for taking the Island had disappeared, and it might well be given back as price for the annexation of Crete to Greece. I think it was very unnecessary for Isvolsky to have made a proposal by which we should incur a sacrifice, in order to grant compensation to Turkey for the wrongdoing of Bulgaria and Austria. The fact that there are already three Greeks to every Mussulman in Cyprus is a very good reason for not giving back the Island to Turkey, and thereby creating another Cretan question. Moreover the Turks, who receive from us Ninety-two thousand pounds a year as tribute, are not likely to wish to have the Island restored to them.

.⁽²⁾

Y[our]s ever,
CHARLES HARDINGE.

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to Persian affairs.]

No. 415.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Reilly.

F.O. 37551/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 29, 1908.

Tel. (No. 1.)

D. 2:30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 1.⁽¹⁾

You should privately discourage visit of Crown Prince. You should also make it clearly understood that while ready to give diplomatic support to such proposals as are fair and reasonable we shall not encourage a breach of the peace and that no State which provokes a conflict must expect either support or sympathy from us.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

It must in any respect be far better that he should be strongly discouraged from coming here or Crown Prince of Serbia will do the same. The arrival of one or more Princes would be very inconvenient during King of Sweden's visit.

E.R.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [This referred to a proposed visit to England by the Crown Prince Danilo of Montenegro.]

⁽²⁾ [This minute has already been published in Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 643.]

No. 416.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 37752/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, October 29, 1908.

Tel. (No. 555.)

D. 5.45 P.M.

Servian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]⁽¹⁾ insists upon cession of a band of territory to connect Serbia and Montenegro; failing this he might be content with undertaking from Austria to maintain Bosnia and Herzegovina as a separate constitutional unit. He also advocates railway communication to the Adriatic with cession of Spizza to Montenegro and wants some small concessions on the Danube.

I have pointed out obvious difficulties in the way of inducing Austria to cede territory or limit her sovereign rights. I have said that the majority of the Powers certainly Russia France or England felt that the action of Austria was very inopportune and felt considerable sympathy for Serbia and Montenegro but that in my opinion they would not obtain more than could be obtained by a peaceful solution. I told him that we should give our diplomatic support to Russia in her attitude about the Servian demands, and laid stress upon this but that it must not be expected that we should push matters to the point of provoking a conflict. He urged that if Servian demands could not be obtained question of Annexation should be left open and protests remain. It was pointed out to him that in this case Austria while retaining Bosnia and Herzegovina might any day resume her liberty of action in the Sandjak and that the Powers would probably feel that to leave question open indefinitely involved danger of war.

I have told Russian Ambassador purport of my interview and you may inform Isvolsky.

Repeat to Belgrade, (No. 27) October 29, 1908.

⁽¹⁾ [M. Milovanović, who had just arrived from St. Petersburg. This interview is given at much greater length in Despatch No. 53 of Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead of October 28, 1908. King Edward declined to see M. Milovanović and recommended that Prince Danilo (v. preceding document, minute) should be discouraged from visiting England. Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 643.]

No. 417.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Salis.

F.O. 88151/31738/08/44.

(No. 302.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 29, 1908.

Count Metternich told me to-day that he had heard from Berlin the upshot of the conversations with M. Iswolsky.⁽¹⁾

The German Government agreed in principle to a Conference, provided the programme was defined and agreed to beforehand. He described their attitude much to the same effect as the Russian Ambassador had described it to me already,⁽²⁾ and as he himself had described it to me originally.

He dwelt again upon the impossibility of getting any territorial compensation for Serbia, and the danger of encouraging Servian aspirations by holding out hopes of diplomatic support.

I said I did not think any Powers had encouraged Serbia to think of war. Her desires ranged over a wide field: from territorial advantages to facilities for a

⁽¹⁾ [For German accounts of these conversations, v. *G.P.* XXVI, I, pp. 206-9, and also for views expressed to Baron von Aehrenthal, October 30, *ib.* pp. 224-7.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 469-70, No. 411.]

railway to the Adriatic. The latter was a thing which we had always promised to support.

Count Metternich expressed some apprehension about the views of the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs as described in the Press.

I told him that in my interview, the Minister had explained to me very fully the feelings of Servia. But I had not encouraged him to expect any thing which could not be obtained by a peaceful solution.⁽³⁾

Count Metternich said that things in general did not seem to be making much progress.

I replied that, till either Austria or Bulgaria could make some offer to Turkey which would be satisfactory to her, I did not see how things could make much progress. Another point was that the Russian Government would no doubt need a few days in which to consider M. Iswolsky's report on his visits to the various capitals.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

(³) [v. G.P. XXVI. I, p. 264.]

No. 418.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, October 30, 1908.

F.O. 37770/31738/08/44A.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 233.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

I have seen Minister for Foreign Affairs and communicated to him substance of your conversation with Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs. He is not uneasy as to Servia or Montenegro disturbing the peace for the present, but he is very anxious as to some news which he has received from two quarters as to a strong party at Buda-Pesth, supposed to be inspired by the heir apparent, urging the occupation of Belgrade by Austria. He believes that Rome has received similar intelligence. He hears that the Emperor is against the project, but if it were realized consequences would be incalculably disastrous. He does not think that effervescence here amongst press and public is at present dangerous, as it is largely engineered with the object of embarrassing the Government, but of course any aggression on the part of Austria would entirely change the situation. He thought that any representations at Vienna might do more harm than good, and, moreover, news might not be true. He asked whether I had heard anything on the subject, and I replied in the negative.

He was much impressed when at Berlin by the evident intention of Germany to act (group undecypherable: ?throughout) with Austria. When he pressed Prince Bülow as to whether the alliance with Austria-Hungary went farther than the supposed objects of the triple alliance and extended even to affairs in the Balkan Peninsula, he was told clearly and frankly that owing to the present grouping of the European Powers Germany would act with Austria-Hungary in perfect and close solidarity on every question. He is afraid that the attitude of the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs gives little hope of satisfactory issue of the discussions as to Conference. He gave Austrian Ambassador to-day copy of draft programme, as he understood that Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs asserted that he had no official knowledge of it. He asked to be furnished with the views of Austria on the nine points.

Servian Crown Prince and Servian Special Envoy are being advised to be cautious and prudent, but he repeated that danger is at Vienna and not at Belgrade and Cettinje.

He is not yet decided whether he should make a speech to the Duma. He thinks it absolutely necessary that he should do so, but there are the reactionaries both at Court and in the Cabinet against this course.

No. 419.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 37770/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 31, 1908.

Tel. (No. 31.)

D. 1.30 P.M.

Sir A. Nicolson's tel[egram] No. 233.⁽¹⁾

You should strongly urge the Servian Gov[ernmen]t to be very careful to avoid any possible cause of provocation to Austria and to be very prudent in their attitude.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

No. 420.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 37770/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, October 31, 1908.

Tel. (No. 563.)

D. 4 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 31 to Mr. Whitehead.⁽¹⁾

It was at the instance of the Italian Gov[ernmen]t whose motive is fear of Austria being given pretext for aggressive action that I sent these instructions. You should inform M. Isvolsky and express the hope that the Russian Minister may be instructed to give similar advice.⁽²⁾

I agree with the view stated in your tel[egram] No. 233⁽³⁾ that representations at Vienna are undesirable at present, but you may inform M. Isvolsky that, in the event of the rumoured intention of Austria to occupy Belgrade or take the aggressive being confirmed, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will do all in their power at Vienna to dissuade Austria from such a step and to urge peaceful relations with Servia.

Telegraph to Sir F. Bertie, Paris, the first two paragraphs only, substituting M. Pichon for M. Isvolsky and French Minister for Russian Minister (No. 241), October 31, 1908.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [Same request in Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie, Telegram No. 241 of October 31, 1908. French Government instructed their Minister accordingly.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 474-5, No. 418.]

No. 421.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 38872/31738/08/44A.

(No. 485.)

St. Petersburg, D. October 31, 1908.

Sir,

R. November 9, 1908.

I visited M. Isvolsky yesterday afternoon and had a long conversation with him on the general situation.

I first broached the subject of the attitude of Servia and of Montenegro, and I communicated to him the substance of the remarks which you had made to

M. Milovanovitch on the occasion of his visit to you,⁽¹⁾ and I asked M. Iswolsky whether he could furnish me with the views of the Russian Government as to the wishes of Servia.

His Excellency said that the question was an exceedingly perplexing one, and at present he did not see his way very clearly. He had impressed on M. Pachitch, and the Emperor had also given the Crown Prince of Servia clearly to understand, that it was necessary that Servia should observe the greatest prudence and moderation. He understood from M. Pachitch that so long as the Powers did not ratify the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Servia would remain quiet, and so some time would be gained, pending discussions as to the questions to be submitted to the Conference.

I pointed out to M. Iswolsky that it might be dangerous leaving the question open indefinitely, especially as the feeling here seemed to be running very high in favour of Servia. Although, doubtless, it would be officially impressed on M. Pachitch that Servia should be patient, still the attitude which the Russian Duma, press and public were assuming might give him some encouragement. The unanimous vote the other day in the Duma would possibly have an effect.

M. Iswolsky observed that though the Slav feeling had been aroused, it would not be wise to take all that was said and written too seriously. There was also in it a desire to cause embarrassment to the Government. As to the causes which had led to the vote in the Duma, he personally regretted the attitude which the authorities had adopted in prohibiting discussions at a public meeting. Moreover the speeches which had been forbidden were all delivered the next evening at another meeting without hindrance. The fact was that the Government were too much imbued with the old bureaucratic prejudices against public speeches. He had always told M. Stolypine and others that words did no harm, and that it was better to give free liberty of speech; in fact to allow people to let off their steam. But to return to the question of Servia, it was not, he said, from Belgrade and Cetinje that he feared danger but from Vienna. He had received information from two sources, and he believed similar intelligence had been received at Rome, that at Budapest there was a large party, at the head of which was the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, who were [*sic*] urging the Austrian Government to occupy Belgrade, in view of the demonstrations and insults against Austria-Hungary. He understood that the Emperor Franz Josef was opposed to such a step, but His Majesty might be persuaded. If Belgrade were occupied by Austrian troops the disastrous consequences would be incalculable. The Russian Government and the Duma most certainly did not desire war, but if Austria were to perpetrate an act of aggression, it would be impossible to foresee to what extremities public opinion here might push matters. He was most anxious as to this point. He enquired whether I had received any similar information; and I replied in the negative. I had, I said, known that the Austrian Minister at Belgrade had made some strong representations on the subject of the demonstrations and had intimated that if they continued Austria might lose patience. But I could hardly conceive the possibility of Austria deliberately committing an act of war. M. Iswolsky observed that there was no saying what Baron d'Aerenthal might endeavour to do.

This remark brought M. Iswolsky to explain to me what had passed at Buchlau, but as you will be already in possession of all that passed at that momentous interview it is unnecessary for me to report His Excellency's remarks. I may state that his strictures on the conduct of Baron d'Aerenthal were as severe as any which I have noticed in the Russian press. He added that the Emperor had been much annoyed and indignant at the action of Baron d'Aerenthal. M. Iswolsky concluded his remarks on this subject by asserting that Baron d'Aerenthal was "a most dangerous man."

I then inquired of him what impressions he had carried away from Berlin. They were certainly not satisfactory. He told me that Germany did not decline a

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 473, No. 416 and *note*.]

Conference, and made no objection to the various points of the Draft programme;⁽²⁾ but had stated that she would exercise no pressure of any kind on Austria-Hungary, and would support her throughout. He had wished to clear up this question fully, and had, therefore, said to Prince Bülow that so far as he understood, the Triple Alliance was a defensive alliance with certain specified *casus fœderis*; but he would like to know whether the support which Germany was disposed to give to Austria extended to all questions, even to those affecting the Balkan Peninsula. Prince Bülow had replied to him with categorical clearness that owing to the present grouping of the European Powers, Germany intended in all questions whatsoever and in whatever quarter to act in perfect solidarity with Austria-Hungary. I enquired of M. Iswolsky whether this obligation to co-operate in matters possibly outside of the original scope and intention of the Triple Alliance was equally incumbent on Italy. To this M. Iswolsky replied that he did not know, but he believed that recently some additional engagements had been concluded between Germany and Austria-Hungary, and this gave him much cause for reflection. Suppose circumstances excited Russian public opinion to such an extent as to force the Russian Government to take some measures, Austria would mobilize and this mobilization would no doubt be followed immediately by a similar measure on the part of Germany; and then consider the position of Russia. This close solidarity between Germany and Austria, and the uncertain and obscure outlook of Near Eastern affairs, in which Russia may be forced to take a part, do, I see, weigh very heavily on M. Iswolsky; and of all the impressions which His Excellency has carried away from his various visits to European capitals, the impression of the intention of Germany to support Austria-Hungary in all circumstances and in all quarters has been the deepest.

I asked him what in his opinion were the prospects of a Conference. He said that as he understood that Baron d'Aerenthal asserted that he was not *saisi* of the points to be submitted to a Conference, he had given Count Berchtold, whom he had seen yesterday, a copy of the nine points, and had requested him to ascertain the views of the Vienna Cabinet in regard to them. But he appeared to have great doubts as to whether Austria would place herself on a ground which would render discussion practicable or possible. He remarked that Baron d'Aerenthal had laid down that the question of the annexation was *indiscutable*.⁽³⁾ This was a strange attitude to assume, and one with which he could not acquiesce. Russia in 1871 had made no difficulties in submitting to a Conference her desire to be freed from onerous restrictions in the Black Sea; and again, in 1878 Russia had entered a Conference in which the Treaty she had concluded with a vanquished enemy was entirely remodelled. To violate a Treaty and to decline to have the matter even examined by other cosignatories was an arbitrary proceeding.

I said that perhaps Austria might succeed in coming to an understanding with Turkey, and that this would greatly facilitate matters. He enquired whether the negotiations between Austria and Turkey had been broken off or merely suspended. I told him that I was not quite clear on that point, and I took the opportunity of saying that the reports which had appeared in the Viennese press as to Great Britain having interrupted the negotiations were entirely unfounded. We were quite willing that they should proceed and terminate successfully.

M. Iswolsky asked if we held to a Conference being assembled. I said that I understood that my Government would welcome any possible solution whether through a Conference or by some other means. I asked him if he proposed shortly to make a declaration in the Duma as to the policy of the Russian Government. M. Iswolsky reflected for a moment, and replied that he did not know if he should be in a position to do so just yet. I remarked that the Deputies appeared to be anxiously, perhaps impatiently, awaiting a statement from him. He said that he was aware of this. He himself was desirous of explaining several matters; but that there were different opinions in regard to this subject. The reactionaries in Court and official circles,

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 453-4, No. 390.]

(3) [*cp.* p. 469, No. 410.]

perhaps even in the Cabinet itself, were opposed to his mounting the tribune and explaining his policy. Such a step was too "parliamentarian" for their taste. No decision had yet been arrived at on the subject.

He again reverted to the news which had reached him as to the alleged desire of influential parties in Austria to make a *coup de main* on Belgrade. He feared that it would be of no avail to make, in the present temper of Baron d'Aerenthal, any representations at Vienna. This might do more harm than good. One could not speak at Vienna in the same language as might be employed at Sofia or Constantinople, and moreover the intelligence which he had received might not be true.

M. Iswolsky sighed and remarked that he was in a particularly embarrassing position; he could not yet see his way clearly. He was tired in mind and body and the last few weeks had placed a great strain on him. I fully sympathized with him, and I said that I hoped he had been satisfied with his visit to London. He brightened up at once, and said he had been most kindly and hospitably treated, and it had been a real pleasure to him to have met you and other leading men in England. His Majesty The King had been particularly gracious and kind to him, and he had carried away with him the most pleasant recollections. He need not repeat to me the conversations which he had had with you and Lord Morley as doubtless I had been kept fully informed of all that had passed.

I replied in the affirmative, and as our conversation had lasted a considerable time I took my leave.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 422.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, November 2, 1908.

F.O. 37881/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 236.)

D. 7.26 A.M.

R. 8.45 A.M.

Your telegram No. 563.⁽¹⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] tells me that he has also been addressed by the Italian Gov[ernment] and had already sent instructions to Russian Minister at Belgrade practically in the same sense as yours. He had also impressed to-day both on Servian Crown Prince and on Servian special envoy that Serbia must on no account give any provocation to Austria-Hungary. He has reason to believe that this advice will be followed. He says that his only anxiety at present is what Austria herself may do and he is a little uneasy as to German Emperor's visit to Archduke Franz Ferdinand.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 475, No. 420.]

No. 423.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, November 2, 1908.

F.O. 38217/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 69.)

D. 8.30 P.M.

R. 9.15 P.M.

My telegram No. 67.⁽¹⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs informed German Ambassador some days ago that he did not intend to allow his hand to be forced either by public opinion or military party, and that as long as Servia kept within her frontiers Austria-Hungary would not move.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 424.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 38881/31738/08/44A.

(No. 495.)

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. November 2, 1908.**R. November 9, 1908.*

I communicated to M. Iswolsky last evening the instructions which you had sent to the British Minister at Belgrade⁽¹⁾ to impress on the Servian Government that they should be very careful in affording no cause for provocation to Austria-Hungary, and I asked him if he would be disposed to transmit similar instructions to the Russian Minister. I added that you had been approached by the Italian Government on the subject, and I also explained to him the steps which you would be prepared to take at Vienna in certain eventualities.

Monsieur Iswolsky replied that the Italian Government had also addressed themselves to him, and that he had already sent instructions to the Russian Minister at Belgrade very similar to those which you had dispatched to Mr. Whitehead. He had also spoken very seriously both to the Servian Crown Prince and to Monsieur Pachitch, and had warned them that it was essential that Servia should remain tranquil. He had reason to believe that his advice would have a good effect, and he felt no anxiety as to Belgrade: but he was still uneasy as to what Vienna, might do; and it was unfortunate that just at this juncture the Emperor William was to pay a visit to the Archduke Franz Ferdinand.⁽²⁾ He did not know in what frame of mind His Majesty was at the present moment, but if he urged Austria to take decisive measures she might be persuaded to act on his advice. He, however, felt that although the Emperor William was exceedingly incautious in his words he was prudent as to his acts, and this consideration was reassuring.

Monsieur Iswolsky observed that the agitation here was calming down, and he was pleased to notice that the President of the Duma, in his reply to the telegram addressed by the President of the Servian Skuptchina appealing for aid, had been careful to emphasize the necessity of a peaceful solution.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [*c. supra*, p. 475, No. 419.]⁽²⁾ [For this visit, *v. G.P. XXVI*, I, pp. 239-45.]

No. 425.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38883/31738/08/44A.

(No. 497.) Confidential.

Sir,

*St. Petersburg, D. November 3, 1908.**R. November 9, 1908.*

I had the honour of an audience with His Majesty the Emperor this afternoon. I mentioned to His Majesty that since I last had the honour of seeing him serious events had occurred; and His Majesty at once gave me a very clear statement as to how the action of Austria-Hungary has struck him. His Majesty said that doubtless M. Iswolsky had given me a full account of what had passed at Buchlau, so that he need not enter into details on that subject, though he was quite convinced that M. Iswolsky had been led to understand that the project of Baron d'Aerenthal was one which might possibly be put into execution at some future date and was not in immediate contemplation. M. Iswolsky had made a report to him on the interview which had taken place at Buchlau, and it was with the utmost surprise

⁽¹⁾ [This despatch expands telegram No. 238 of the same date, R. November 3, which is not reproduced.]

that a day or two subsequent to receiving the report he heard that annexation had been decided upon and would take place at once. Equally great was the astonishment of M. Iswolsky on reaching Paris to find a letter from Baron d'Aerenthal announcing that, "in consequence of the conversation at Buchlau and in consequence of Russia having given her consent," the annexation would take place immediately. This was a complete misrepresentation of what had passed at Buchlau, and His Majesty had feared that perhaps both in London and in Paris the version given by Baron d'Aerenthal might have been believed.

I told His Majesty that, though the first impression might have been one of surprise, I could assure him that not a shadow of a doubt remained that Russia had not given her assent.

The Emperor said he was well aware of that, and added that it was not a straightforward act on the part of Baron d'Aerenthal. His Majesty said that in 1897 during the visit of the Emperor of Austria to St. Petersburg, Count Goluchowski who had accompanied his sovereign, handed in to Count Mouravieff a long document explaining the reasons which rendered it desirable that Austria-Hungary should annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, and had at the same time stated that the Russian Government should recollect that if they wished to raise the question of the Dardanelles the matter was one of general European interest. Count Mouravieff had replied in a very able memorandum and had stated very clearly that if the Dardanelles question was one of European interest equally so was that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the latter could not be discussed except with all the Powers.⁽²⁾

I observed that it was unfortunate that Baron d'Aerenthal had not read the Protocols of the Conference of 1871 before he had taken his recent step; and His Majesty replied that he had during the last few days been studying them very carefully, and he had remarked that both Lord Granville and the Austrian Plenipotentiary had laid stress on the matter then before the Conference being submitted to a full discussion and an impartial examination.

I asked His Majesty what he considered were the prospects of the Conference. The Emperor said that he was to have a long conversation with M. Iswolsky this evening, and in two or three days he trusted to be in a position to decide on the line of policy which Russia would pursue in regard to the Conference.

I said that the acute danger of the situation seemed to have passed away, but there still remained the risk at Belgrade and perhaps at Vienna. The Emperor replied that the feeling which had been awakened here on behalf of Serbia, though far less in open demonstration than had been the case in 1876 when the Government was carried away by it, was still a very deep one. It was really a very natural feeling—one indeed which as a man he himself shared—. It was based both on religious and on racial affinity, and perhaps it had not been sufficiently appreciated abroad. He considered that on this occasion, leaving aside hasty and ill-considered words which may have been flung out in irresponsible quarters, the feeling had been kept within very moderate bounds. The Government were most anxious that it should take no form which could be interpreted as threatening; and he really thought that very creditable restraint had been shown. He had seen both the Servian Crown Prince and M. Pachitch, and had spoken very seriously to both. The Crown Prince had not been asked to come here: he had requested permission to do so, and had been told that he might come on condition that his visit was an unofficial one. He had brought a letter from King Peter—a very moderate letter merely expressing the hope that Serbia might receive the moral support of Russia. His Majesty said that he had impressed on the Crown Prince that it was essential that Serbia should remain quiet and should give no cause for provocation to Austria. "I told him," said His Majesty, "that because you consider yourself injured that is no reason why you should crack your skull against a stone wall. You can gain nothing by that. You say that there are many Servians under foreign domination:

(2) [For the further views of the Czar on the Dardanelles, *v. G.P.*, XXVI, I, pp. 380-2.]

but do you think that this is a grievance peculiar to your country? Why Russia has some few millions, real Russians, under Austrian rule in Galicia—the Ruthenes—and do you think that Russia has during so many years once made a grievance of that fact? Far from it, and Russia you must remember is a big country and Servia a very small one.”

His Majesty said that he had every reason to believe that Servia would keep quiet; and he sincerely trusted that she would, after the serious advice which had been given her by several Powers, see the folly of disturbing the peace by any headlong adventures.

As to Bulgaria, His Majesty thought that there all was in a fair way to a settlement with Turkey, and his mind was easy on that score. In regard to Vienna, he had confidence in the Emperor Franz Josef; but if any aggressive attack were made on Servia he would not answer for the effect which might be produced on Russian public opinion. Generally speaking His Majesty considered that the public opinion here would calm down. If any troubles arose in Russia on that account, that was his affair and concerned no one else; but the attitude of Russia in regard to the situation from an international point of view would be most pacific and he would do all in his power to favour a peaceable solution.

I told His Majesty that the visit of M. Iswolsky had had the most favourable results in regard to the relations between our two countries. The Emperor interrupted me and said that nothing could change the intimate relations so happily existing. I said that I was sure of that, but I wished to state, and that I had your authority for doing so, that the visit of M. Iswolsky had established a thoroughly sound and stable confidence in the sincerity of Russian policy with Great Britain. This confidence, I was glad to see, was being reflected in the press of England, and my Government looked forward to a hearty co-operation with Russia in all questions. There were, I admitted, in my country still unbelievers and doubters, but even these I hoped would be converted in time. The Emperor said that in his own country there were also opponents to a good understanding; but that he had been much gratified by the excellent results of the visit of M. Iswolsky and with the reception which had been accorded to him. He was determined to act most cordially in all questions everywhere with Great Britain; of that I might rest assured and could so assure my Government. This His Majesty said with great emphasis. The conversation then turned to other subjects, which I would beg leave to reserve for other despatches.

I may add that the Emperor was exceedingly severe in his judgment of the action of Baron d'Aerenthal, which he characterized as “positively ignominious”; though he expressed great respect and affection for the aged Emperor. His Majesty said that he must now reply to the letter which the Emperor Franz Josef had written to him, and he was afraid that he had left it unanswered for a month.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 426.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 38498/31738/08/44.
Tel. (No. 175.)

Foreign Office, November 4, 1908.

D. 6 P.M.

You may inform the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t that we have strongly urged counsels of prudence at Belgrade and the avoidance of all provocation to Austria.

We have received satisfactory assurances from the Servian Gov[ernmen]t both here and at Belgrade that, while awaiting the Conference of the Powers, they will take very severe measures to prevent hostile demonstrations and to protect Austro-Hungarian subjects in Servia.

[16789]

The Servian Gov[ernment] have at the same time complained of Austrian Military preparations on the frontier and of the stoppage of importation into Servia of war material, railway and bridging material and chemical substances, but this cannot be made the subject of observations on your part to the Austrian Gov[ernment].
Repeated to Belgrade (No. 37) November 4, 1908.

No. 427.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Sophia, November 4, 1908.

F.O. 38433/31738/08/44A.

D. 7 P.M.

Tel. (No. 75.) Very Confidential.

R. 7.30 P.M.

Sir F. Bertie's telegram No. 84.⁽¹⁾

My impression is that no secret understanding exists for eventual partition of Servia. In the spring of last year, when war with Servia was talked of, Prince Ferdinand assured me that existence of a strong and independent Servia was essential to Bulgaria's interests. He has quite recently held similar language to others.

Both Prince Ferdinand and his Government are, I believe, pre-occupied with idea of an Austrian advance next spring. It is for this reason that they desire close understanding if not alliance with Turkey. I do not know whether subject will be broached during the present negotiations, but Bulgarian Delegate has been instructed not to raise Macedonian questions for fear of causing irritation.

On the other hand, I hear that Austria is making advances by offering to facilitate passage of Bulgarian war material. Prince Ferdinand is an opportunist, and, having obtained his crown through Austria, will turn against her if it is to his interest. Only in the event of Turkey rejecting his overtures and leaving him isolated is he likely to make common cause with Austro-Hungary.

(Sent to Constantinople.)

MINUTES.

This probably describes the situation accurately.

The plan of a partition of Servia sounded most unlikely and any durable agreement between Austria and Bulgaria is also unlikely—though perhaps in a less degree.

I think the Balkan federation would best serve the purpose of all the Balkan states—including for a time at any rate Turkey—and would be the best chance of keeping Servia quiet.

J. A. C. T.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram dated November 1, 1908, D. 4 P.M., R. 5.45 P.M. (F.O. 37883/31738/08/44A), closed with the paragraph quoted below; the preceding part is unimportant and deals with the action of the French Government at Belgrade, v. telegram of Sir E. Grey to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 563 of October 31, 1908, *supra*, p. 475, No. 420, *note*.]

(Most Confidential.)

French Government had no direct or positive information as to the intentions or designs of Austria, but there was an impression or suspicion that her withdrawal from Novi-Bazar may cover a design, in a future more or less distant, according to opportunity, to make advance towards Salonica through Servia, and that there may be a secret understanding between Austria and Bulgaria, if Servia gave a pretext for action on the part of Austria or Bulgaria, to divide Servia between them. The accusation made a little time ago against Servia of having instigated the blowing up of a powder magazine in Bulgaria, of which no proof was produced, might have been incidentally created to produce a collision. These are (? group undecypherable), however, suspicions only, and not conclusions on reliable information.]

It is quite a sufficient reason for Turkey to have some kind of an alliance with Bulgaria, that she will turn to Austria and Germany, if the Porte refuses. The prospect of Bulgaria as well as Roumania being in the German camp is not very pleasant.

I think this might be pointed out to Sir G. Lowther.

L. M.

I don't think we need telegraph to Sir G. Lowther. I will mention it to the Turkish Ambassador.

E. G.

No. 428.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, November 5, 1908.

F.O. 38552/31738/08/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 72.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

I took my official leave of Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day, and presented Mr. Carnegie as Chargé d'Affaires.

I had some talk with His Excellency first. He told me that he had received Russian programme of Conference, and that he would send his answer as soon as possible. All he could say now was, that much depended upon what was meant by "advantages for Montenegro and Servia." Austria-Hungary could in no case admit territorial compensation at her expense, and if that was suggested there could be no Conference. Such a result would mean danger, as Servia and Montenegro might rush into an adventure. At Buchlau he had told Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that territorial compensation was out of the question, but at the same time had given him to understand that he would be quite ready to support proposals for the suppression of Article 29 of Treaty of Berlin as regards Montenegro, and for giving Servia access to the sea by Adriatic Railway, representation on Danube Commission, and such economic advantages as might be found possible. To that statement he still held.

As regards Servian attitude, he renewed assurance that Austro-Hungary would continue to be patient, except in case of active aggression. The question of flag at Semendria had caused some anxiety, but it was now nearly, if not quite, settled.

I gave His Excellency message contained in your telegram No. 175,⁽¹⁾ received to-day. He begged me to thank you for it. He trusted that representations from Governments would have good effect. He appreciated them highly, as they made for peace.

I feel convinced that His Excellency now strongly desires that Conference should take place.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 481-2, No. 426.]

No. 429.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 39864/31738/08/44A.

(No. 172.) Very Confidential.

Vienna, D. November 5, 1908.

Sir,

R. November 16, 1908.

I have the honour to report that yesterday I presented my letters of Recall to the Emperor at an audience which His Imperial Majesty was pleased to grant me for that purpose.

The same imposing ceremonial was observed as is customary in the presentation of letters of credence, with the exception that the departing Ambassador drives to the Hofburg in his own state carriage and alone.

[16789]

2 1 2

The Emperor was pleased to give me a very cordial reception. His Majesty said that He was exceedingly sorry that I was leaving Vienna just when affairs were in rather an unsettled state and when there was some difference of opinion on certain matters between Austria-Hungary and Great Britain. "But," His Majesty added, "we are such old and good friends that I am sure that any slight misunderstanding that may now exist will soon pass away, and we shall be as good friends as ever."

His Majesty then said that Serbia continued to be the black spot on the horizon. He hoped that all would go well, but the Servians must not push things too far, as Austria-Hungary had already pushed patience to the verge of imprudence. The crucial moment would arrive when the Servian Envoys returned to Belgrade. In the meantime He had heard with pleasure that Great Britain as well as other Powers had counselled prudence and moderation at Belgrade, and He trusted that those counsels would have their due effect. He was however both hurt and astonished at the reception which had been accorded to the Servian Crown Prince at St. Petersburg after the inflammatory and insulting speeches which had been delivered by that truculent young Prince against Austria-Hungary. I ventured to say to His Majesty that it was possible to regard the matter in a different light, and that it appeared to me that the Russian Government might have considered that they were acting in the general interest by getting the Prince out of Belgrade at a very ticklish moment and giving him sound advice. The Emperor said with a smile that the explanation would serve, but He knew that M. Isvolsky had said that had he been in St. Petersburg when the visit was mooted, he would have done his best to prevent it.

After making the most cordial enquiries as to the health and movements of The King, The Emperor concluded the audience by thanking me most graciously for the friendly way in which I had carried out my duties during the three years I had been at His Court, by wishing me success in my new post, and by kindly expressing the hope that as I had a property in Austria He might see me sometimes when I passed through Vienna. His Imperial Majesty was also pleased to inform me that He proposed to come to His Majesty's Embassy to say good-bye to Lady Goschen on Friday next.

I am glad to be able to report that His Majesty seemed to be in most excellent health; indeed He looked better than I have seen Him look for some time. His Majesty attributed His present good health to his stay at Budapest, where the fine air on the hill where the Hofburg is situated had agreed with Him wonderfully.

In the evening there was a State Banquet at the Hofburg, given in honour of The King of Greece, to which I had the honour of being invited. The following speeches were made,⁽¹⁾ The Emperor speaking in German and The King of Greece replying in French—. . .

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced as published, and of a formal character.]

No. 430.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 39865/31738/08/44A.

(No. 173.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. November 5, 1908.

R. November 16, 1908.

During the *cercle* which took place yesterday evening after the State Banquet, I had a short, but somewhat sharp conversation with Baron d'Aehrenthal on the present situation. I asked His Excellency whether he had received the Programme of the Conference from the Russian Government. He replied in the affirmative, adding

that he had it now under consideration and would furnish the Russian Government with his views as soon as possible. I then asked His Excellency, who did not appear to be in the best of humours, how matters now stood with regard to Servia. He replied that there was no change at present but that if important English newspapers like the "Daily Telegraph" and others went on preaching territorial compensation for Servia, he could not answer for what would happen. I replied that I shared his opinion that some of the articles published had been somewhat injudicious. His Excellency then said, with great heat, "You people in England are incurring a great responsibility; and the Russians too. The attitude of both countries has been anything but friendly, and all I can say is that if Russia wants war she shall have it." I expressed surprise at this unprovoked outburst and then said, "You are always speaking to me of the responsibility which others are incurring, whereas the entire responsibility for the present situation in the Balkans and for the general unrest appears to me to rest with the Austro-Hungarian Government alone." His Excellency replied that he denied all responsibility. He had done what he ought to have done and what he had to do, and he could tell me that the attitude of England in this question had made a very deep and painful impression upon the Emperor. I said that the Emperor had been pleased on several occasions to converse with me on this subject, and while His Majesty had certainly expressed some regret that there was a slight misunderstanding between the two Governments, he had always clothed his regret in friendly language. I added that I did not wish to go over old ground but that as regards the statement "that he had done what he ought to have done," the fact remained that he had violated, or if he preferred the expression, modified the Treaty of Berlin in the face of the Protocol of 1871 of which Austria had been one of the signatories. This was a question of fact which could not be disputed, and it was in itself sufficient to account for the attitude of His Majesty's Government of which he complained. His Excellency then proceeded to make some very unfriendly and acrimonious remarks concerning our treatment of the Boers, which were, as I told him, totally irrelevant to the question we were discussing. Fortunately at that moment the King of Greece came up to speak to me and I saw nothing more of His Excellency that evening.⁽¹⁾

On the next day I called upon His Excellency to take my official leave of him and to present Mr. Carnegie as Chargé d'Affaires. I found him all smiles and in excellent humour. He made no reference to our conversation of the evening before and as I had practically said all I had wanted to say in answer to his splenetic remarks, I also observed complete silence on the subject. He was good enough to express great regret at my departure and to say that though we had had our little discussions and differences of opinion, we had always been on the best of terms and our relations both official and private had been most pleasant and agreeable.

As regards the Programme of the Conference he said that he hoped to answer the Russian note in a few days. He had no objection whatever to the annexation of the provinces being brought up at the Conference so long as it was for the purpose of recognising it and so long as it was not to be made the subject of discussion. But it would be necessary, before he could decide anything, that he should know precisely what meaning was attached to the words "advantages for Montenegro and Servia." He had told M. Isvolsky at Buchlau very plainly that it was out of the question that Servia should receive any territorial compensation at the expense of Austria-Hungary, but that he would be quite willing to take into his favourable consideration any proposals that might be made in the direction of giving Servia and Montenegro certain moral and economic advantages. In Montenegro for instance the revision of Article 29 of the Berlin Treaty; for Servia, access to the sea by means of the Adriatic Railway, facilities for the transport of live stock through Bosnia and Herzegovina, and

⁽¹⁾ [This conversation and the previous interview described in a private letter of October 14 (pp. 445-6, No. 381) are referred to by Mr. H. Wickham Steed in a letter to the *Times* of 22 May, 1924 (quoted in error in Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 633 n, p. 634 n. as 21 May, 1925).]

representation in the Danube Commission. Should M. Isvolsky either propose to make the annexation of the Provinces a subject of criticism or discussion or put forward claims for territorial compensation for Serbia or Montenegro, there would, he feared, be no Conference. This would, in his opinion, lead to disastrous results, as Serbia and Montenegro would at once lose the small amount of *sang froid* which they now possessed and decide upon a hopeless and useless warlike adventure.

Since writing the above, I have seen Mr. Chirol of the Times, who had just come from St. Petersburg. He gave me to understand that M. Isvolsky proposed to announce to the Duma his intention to protest against, or at all events to criticize, the annexation at the Conference. It is to be hoped that His Excellency has no such intention as, to judge from Baron d'Aehrenthal's categorical language on this head, both in public and private, the consequence of such an announcement would infallibly be a refusal on the part of Austria-Hungary to attend the Conference.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

MINUTE.⁽²⁾

Approve Sir E. Goschen's language, he answered Baron d'A[ehrenthal] very well.

E. G.

(²) [Two minutes by Mr. L. Mallet and Sir C. Hardinge, commenting on Baron von Aehrenthal's complaints, are here omitted.]

No. 431.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 38668/31738/08/44A.

Belgrade, D. November 6, 1908, 11.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 22.)

R. November 7, 1908, 7 A.M.

French and Russian Minister and I, subsequently also Italian Chargé d'Affaires, were invited this afternoon to an "intime Conférence" at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs to discuss situation. After consultation we decided that it was impossible to refuse invitation, though agreeing that proposal was unusual, and deprecating its repetition.

We were received by the Prime Minister, Minister of Education, and Secretary-General of the Servian Foreign Office. Minister of Education, as spokesman, said that Servian Government were determined to act on the advice of our Governments, and were doing all they could to allay excitement and avoid provocations to Austria. Fresh excitement had, however, been caused by arrival of Danube monitors at Semlin, with sappers on board, as these special troops could only be needed for aggressive purposes, such as construction of pontoon bridges. Moreover, Austrian and Servian troops now stood opposite one another on the banks of both rivers, and any accident might produce a conflict. He then asked our advice as to what would be considered provocation.

I replied as previously arranged with my French and Russian colleagues that we could not possibly take responsibility of giving such advice. We had, under instructions from our Governments, urged the greatest care to avoid any provocation, but we could not lay down what constituted provocation. French Minister observed that Belgrade press might be induced to abstain from violent articles and especially from insults to the Emperor of Austria. Minister of Education replied that under existing press laws it was most difficult to restrain newspapers, but promised that Servian Government would do all they could in this respect. As they seemed very depressed and alarmed I quoted from memory Vienna telegram No. 69⁽²⁾ (of 2nd November), adding that I did not suppose for a moment that Servian regular troops would cross the frontier but pointing out danger of bands crossing into Bosnia.

(1) [There is a longer despatch on this same subject No. 82 of November 10, 1908.]

(2) [v. *supra*, p. 478, No. 423.]

Secretary-General said that this was impossible, as both sides of frontier were closely guarded, but the Servian frontier police had reported that emissaries were coming over to buy Servian peasant costumes intended, no doubt, for formation of spurious Servian bands. Italian Chargé d'Affaires quoted assurances given to Italian Ambassador at Vienna, but Secretary-General at once pointed out ambiguous reservations in them similar to those in Vienna telegram No. 67⁽²⁾ (of 2nd November).

We should, I think, all four have liked to advise them to withdraw Servian troops from their present positions on rivers, but felt we could not take responsibility without instructions. I asked whether it was true about 100 Austrian soldiers and non-commissioned officers of Servian nationality having deserted from Kubin to Semendria. The reply was affirmative, but little importance was allowed to the incident on the ground that desertions in the opposite sense are also frequent.

Minister of Education told me that the Servian Government are resisting the popular demand for the removal of the capital, but from other sources I hear treasure and military stores are being sent away.

Crown Prince arrives to-morrow, and a great demonstration will take place. Minister of Education said that this was unavoidable, but hoped that it would not be considered a provocation.

(²) [Not reproduced.]

No. 432.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 39505/31738/08/44.

(No. 751.)

Sir,

Pera, D. November 6, 1908.

R. November 13, 1908.

. . . .⁽¹⁾ I asked the Grand Vizier whether he would not be disposed to meet the Bulgarian Government half-way in the idea of a general good understanding and perhaps even an alliance, for, failing this, Bulgaria might in her present mood be inclined to throw herself into the arms of Austria. But His Highness replied without hesitation that for the present at any rate this idea would find no favour in his eyes, and, judging from the manner in which he treated the possible contingency of a Bulgaro-Austrian arrangement, it was evident that he did not contemplate that an understanding with Bulgaria would furnish a solution of the present difficulties, and indeed seems to me to scout the idea as outside the range of practical politics. He did not believe that Bulgaria was prepared to join in an offensive and defensive alliance against Austria and His Highness did not appear to attach much importance to the possibility of any aggressive action on the part of Serbia or Montenegro.

His Highness had recently asked Monsieur Zinoview, in connection presumably with the proposals discussed with Monsieur Novakovitch in the direction of an alliance between Turkey, Serbia and Montenegro, whether Russia would be likely to lend support to Serbia against Austria, but he had been given to understand that Russia was not prepared to do anything in that direction and had indeed administered some very soothing medicine to the Crown Prince on the occasion of his visit to St. Petersburg.

I have sent a copy of this despatch to His Majesty's Agent at Sofia.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

(¹) [The first part of this despatch is unimportant.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, November 7, 1908.

F.O. 38803/31738/08/44A.

D. 1:50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 245.)

R. 2:30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 580.⁽¹⁾

I communicated your views to Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] this morning as I know he was anxious to have them. He had received a telegram from Berlin which held out some hope of a pacific solution but he is still uneasy and will remain so until the matter is finally arranged.

He has received not very satisfactory news from Sofia that the Turkish demands are exaggerated and that Bulgaria is uneasy as to Turkish military preparations; I understand that he has telegraphed to London and Paris on the subject.

MINUTES.

This news from Sofia is the same as that sent to us by Sir G. Buchanan. The Russians will very likely make some suggestion for further action.

J. A. C. T.

R. P. M.

M. Poklewski has just left me bringing this news—evidently the Bulgarian G[overnmen]t has made the same communication at all the capitals.

M. Isvolsky would like your views as to making a representation at Constantinople in the sense I gather of jointly recommending the Turks to be satisfied with the capitalization of the E[astern] Roumelian Tribute, and Railway compensation.

I think that we should tell the Russians the advice which you have given to the Porte—namely not to ask for more than the Bulgarians can reasonably be expected to pay—and suggest that they should give similar advice.

L. M.

We must wait till we get the proposed telegram to London before we need say anything about the Bulgarian compensation.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 38668/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 38.)

Foreign Office, November 7, 1908.

Substance of your Tel[egram] No. 22⁽¹⁾ has been telegraphed to Vienna⁽²⁾ concluding with following paragraph:—

“Whitehead thinks all four Rep[resentati]ves would have liked to advise withdrawal of Servian troops from their present positions on rivers. It is difficult to urge this at Belgrade without knowing whether Austria would respond to it. You should consult with your three colleagues at Vienna and if they agree the information might be communicated to the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t with an intimation that we should be glad to do anything we can to ease the situation.”

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 486–7, No. 431.]

⁽²⁾ [To Mr. Carnegie, No. 176 of November 7, 1908.]

No. 435.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, November 8, 1908.*

F.O. 38814/31738/08/44A.

D. 6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 246.)

R. 10 P.M.

Having heard from Austrian Ambassador that he made a communication yesterday to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs as to Servian attitude, I called on latter to-day to ascertain whether he had anything to tell me. He is telegraphing to Cabinets of London, Paris, and Rome, who have probably received a similar communication. He appeared to think there is some motive behind the communication, and that, notwithstanding Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' pacific assurances, Austria may yet find excuse for attacking Servia. I believe he will submit to other Powers draft reply to Austrian communication.

I inquired what he thought of the "Conférence Intime" at Belgrade, but he had heard nothing whatever about it from the Russian Minister. I have therefore given the substance of your telegram No. 176 to Vienna,⁽¹⁾ as I thought you would like him to know what has passed and that he might acquaint Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Vienna.

As the Austrian communication is subsequent to Conference at Belgrade and rather alters the situation, I have told Minister for Foreign Affairs that perhaps you would like to examine his draft reply before taking any steps at Vienna as indicated in your telegram No. 176 to Vienna.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 486-7, No. 431, and p. 488, No. 434.]

No. 436.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 39884/31738/08/44A.

(No. 92.) Confidential.

Sophia, D. November 9, 1908.

Sir,

R. November 16, 1908.

In the concluding paragraph, marked most confidential, of his Telegram No. 84 of the 2nd instant,⁽¹⁾ His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris alluded to a Secret Understanding, which is said to exist between Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria for the eventual partition of Servia. Though there are no precise data to guide us, it may be possible to throw some light on the subject by giving a brief sketch of Bulgaria's relations to Servia and Austria during the past few years.

Ever since the Customs Union Treaty of 1905 suffered shipwreck at her hands, Austria has directed her policy to keeping Servia and Bulgaria as far as possible apart. In order to induce Bulgaria to renounce all idea of a political or economic alliance with Servia, Baron d'Aehrenthal, immediately after his accession to office, adopted an attitude of sympathetic benevolence towards the Principality. The Emperor, on his side, lost no opportunity of winning over Prince Ferdinand by various flattering attentions. The latent jealousy and divergent interests of the two States rendered Baron d'Aehrenthal's task an easy one; and in the Springs of 1907 and 1908 their relations became so strained that war seemed almost within sight. Prince Ferdinand, however, refused on both occasions to give the signal for its commencement. It was not that His Royal Highness had any love for Servia, for he bitterly resented her policy in Macedonia and was, moreover, convinced that Belgrade had become a centre of plots against his person. It was rather because, as he assured me on one occasion, the existence of a strong and independent Servia

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 482, No. 427, *note*. The telegram is of the 1st, not the 2nd as here stated.]

is essential to the well-being of Bulgaria. Despite his leanings towards Vienna, which are to be explained by the fact that Russia, since the Japanese War, has not been in a position to assist him, Prince Ferdinand has no desire to have Austria for a next door neighbour, as he has always cherished the most profound distrust of her policy. This distrust is shared by the great majority of his Subjects; and, when in 1904 Austria was credited with the intention of profiting by Russia's embarrassments to occupy certain districts in Macedonia, I was assured that Bulgaria would in such case join hands with Turkey and attempt to bar her progress.

In the summer of last year, when the Grand Duke Vladimir was at Sofia, one of the leading members of the Cabinet declared that Bulgaria's aim and object must be to sow dissension between Austria and Russia and to finally side with whichever of the two would pay the highest price for her cooperation. This, I believe, has been Prince Ferdinand's policy ever since. From Russia, whose one desire it has been to postpone any serious crisis in the Near East till she had recovered from the effects of her defeat, His Royal Highness has obtained nothing but counsels of prudence and moderation. Whenever He suggested that the time had come for the Declaration of Independence, He was told that Russia was not ready and that He must abide her good pleasure. The unreadiness of Russia was Austria's opportunity. She had need of an accomplice in her contemplated attack on the Treaty of Berlin and she was able to oblige Prince Ferdinand at the same time that she promoted her own interests. When the bargain was actually struck or what were the engagements taken on either side, are secrets which it is difficult to penetrate. Prince Ferdinand, however, is such a consummate diplomatist that he probably took care not to bind himself definitely as regards the unforeseen possibilities of the future. He has always been an opportunist and has never been troubled by the sense of obligation or benefits received. The fact that it was Austria, who helped him to win his Crown, is not likely to weigh with him. So long as his interests are identic with hers, so long will he continue to cooperate with her. When once their respective paths diverge, he will not hesitate to turn against her.

Both Prince Ferdinand and his Government are preoccupied with the idea of a possible Austrian advance into Macedonia next Spring; for, if really contemplated, it must be made before Russia has put her house in order. Such an advance, if successfully carried out, would be fatal alike to Bulgaria's material interests in the present and to the realisation of her national aspirations in the future. It is for this reason that Prince Ferdinand is so anxious to arrive at a close understanding with Turkey and even to conclude a regular alliance with her. From Sir G. Lowther's Telegrams it would appear that the Grand Vizier is not disposed to entertain any proposals of this nature until the questions at present outstanding between the two Governments have been finally settled. His Highness also does not believe that there is any danger of Bulgaria making common cause with Austria. I am not prepared to go so far; nor do I think that his Highness will be wise if, acting on this belief, he treats Bulgaria as a *quantité négligeable* in the present critical state of Balkan affairs. Should Austria really make a forward movement and find herself confronted by Turkey, Servia and Montenegro, Bulgaria would almost be in a position to turn the scale on whichever side she might elect to throw her sword. Her natural inclination would be to join forces with Turkey; but if the Ottoman Government rejects his overtures, Prince Ferdinand, finding himself isolated, may be tempted to make a bargain with Austria. In a partition of Servia the districts of Nisch and Pirot would probably fall to his share, but he would also try to obtain an increase of territory at Turkey's expense in Macedonia.

In submitting the above impressions of what, I trust, is only a hypothetical contingency, I have not attempted to take into account the possible intervention of any of the Great Powers nor of Roumania, though, were Bulgaria to march against Austria, Russia would probably hold Roumania in check. My main object has been to show how important a factor Bulgaria may become on the outbreak of hostilities. Her adhesion to an anti-Austrian League, composed of Turkey, Servia and

Montenegro, would, I venture to think, give such force to that coalition that Austria might well pause before embarking on so hazardous an enterprise. It would, indeed, constitute a very effective barrier to an Austro-German advance in the future. For this reason, however, Germany and Austria will doubtless use all their influence at Constantinople to prevent the conclusion of anything in the shape of a close understanding between Turkey and Bulgaria. Should Turkey, however, let the present opportunity slip, she may one day regret that, in addition to a money indemnity, she did not seek for compensation in the support of the Bulgarian Army in the time of storm and stress which lies ahead of her.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

No. 437.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 39303/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, November 9, 1908.

Tel. (No 41.)

D. 10 P.M.

Austrian Gov[ernmen]t have drawn the attention of the Powers to Servian and Montenegrin preparations for war while only police measures have been taken on their side. They urge a renewal of the pacific advice already given by the Powers at Belgrade.

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t are of opinion that the R[epresentatives] at Belgrade should, in the interests of peace, not only renew their former representations but should examine what practical measures there may be for improving the relations between Austria and Servia. The Servian Gov[ernmen]t should engage to avoid any step which might be regarded as of an aggressive nature; while the R[ussian] R[epresentative] of the Powers should decide on the spot as to any special measures to which the particular attention of the Servian Gov[ernmen]t might be called.

You are authorised to cooperate with your Russian, and French colleagues in the above sense as soon as they have received similar instructions.

Repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 536), Paris (No. 253), Vienna (No. 178), November 9, 1908.

No. 438.

Memorandum communicated by Count Benckendorff, November 9, 1908.

F.O. 39303/31738/08/44.

Le Gouvernement de SA MAJESTE Britannique doit avoir connaissance du texte d'une dépêche circulaire du Baron d'Aehrenthal communiquée par l'Ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie à St-Petersbourg au Gouvernement IMPERIAL.

En même temps qu'elle contient des remerciements aux Puissances pour les conseils de modération donnés à Belgrade, cette dépêche signale des mesures militaires considérables prises par la Serbie ces derniers temps et qui ne sauraient être considérées que comme de véritables préparatifs de guerre; le Monténégro de son côté aurait adopté des mesures analogues.

Par contre aucune mesure de cet ordre n'a été prise par l'Autriche-Hongrie, si ce n'est une augmentation très légère de la gendarmerie de frontière.

La dépêche du Baron d'Aehrenthal a pour but d'attirer l'attention des Puissances sur ces faits afin de faire continuer à Belgrade des démarches dans l'intérêt de la paix et de faire renouveler énergiquement les conseils déjà donnés antérieurement.

Cette démarche dénotant la gravité de la situation qui existe entre les deux Etats, le Gouvernement IMPERIAL serait d'avis que, dans l'intérêt de la paix, les Puissances

qui ont déjà fait des démarches auprès du Gouvernement Serbe chargeassent sans retard leur représentants à Belgrade non seulement de renouveler ces démarches conformément au désir du Cabinet de Vienne, mais aussi d'examiner les moyens pratiques de nature à porter remède à la situation qui existe entre la Serbie et l'Empire voisin. Il y aurait lieu d'engager le Gouvernement Serbe à éviter toute mesure pouvant être interprétée comme une intention d'agression; il y aurait également lieu pour les représentants des Puissances de définir sur place les sujets précis sur lesquels l'attention toute particulière du Cabinet de Belgrade pourrait être utilement appelée.

Des instructions identiques devraient donc, dans l'idée du Gouvernement IMPERIAL, être adressées à ce sujet par les Puissances à leur représentants à Belgrade.

Pour ce qui est de l'effervescence qui s'était produite un moment au Monténégro, elle paraît s'être calmée; dès lors des nouvelles démarches à Cettigné ne semblent pas nécessaires pour le moment.

No. 439.

Count Benckendorff to Foreign Office.

F.O. 39886/31738/08/44.

Chesham House, Chesham Place, London,

My dear Hardinge,

November 9, 1908.

I enclose the memorandum I promised you to-day.

Yours sincerely,

BENCKENDORFF.

Enclosure in No. 439.

Memorandum.

Dans un aide-mémoire communiqué à M. Iswolsky par l'Ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie, le Cab[ine]t de Vienne se déclare disposé, le cas échéant, à soutenir une action des trois Puissances médiatrices à Constantinople en vue de faire aboutir à un accord les négociations qui se poursuivent actuellement entre les délégués turcs et bulgares.

Le Cab[ine]t de Vienne trouve, qu'en présence de l'attitude de la Sublime Porte, laquelle, nonobstant l'attitude pacifique et conciliante adoptée par la Bulgarie, aurait élevé des prétensions très exagérées, tout en ne discontinuant pas ses armements, il serait juste que le Gouv[ernemen]t Bulgare désire obtenir l'appui des trois Puissances, et aussi celui de l'Autriche.

Le Cab[ine]t Impérial attribue une valeur sérieuse aux dispositions exposées dans le mémorandum autrichien. Il estime que l'appui proposé par le Cab[ine]t de Vienne aux trois Puissances, serait de nature à faciliter sensiblement l'établissement de l'entente si vivement désirée par elles concernant la question turco-bulgare.

Pour ces raisons le Gouv[ernemen]t Imp[éria]l se plaît à espérer que son point de vue sera partagé par le Gouv[ernemen]t de Sa Majesté Britannique.

Des démarches analogues sont faites à Paris et à Rome.

No. 440.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 39856/31738/08/44A.

(No. 83.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. November 10, 1908.

R. November 16, 1908.

In my Telegram No. 19 of the 26th Ultimo,⁽¹⁾ I had the honour to inform you of M. Spalaikovitch's statement that the Grand Vizier had proposed to M. Novakovitch,

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 465, No. 405.]

the Servian Special Envoy at Constantinople, the conclusion of a Military Convention or defensive alliance between Turkey, Servia and Montenegro.

I have since had two further conversations with M. Spalaikovitch on this subject. When he called upon me on the 1st Instant he said that the draft of the Convention was on its way to Belgrade, that it was hoped at the Porte that at some future time Bulgaria and Greece would also join this defensive alliance of the Balkan States, and that meanwhile the Turks were endeavouring to ascertain to what extent Bulgaria had engaged herself to Austria-Hungary, as it was now quite clear to them that the declaration of independence and the annexation had been previously concerted. The Convention, he said, would amount to an offensive and defensive alliance, but would of course apply to Europe only, as neither Servia nor Montenegro could engage to help in defending Turkey's Asiatic provinces. According to the original proposal Servia and Montenegro were debarred the right of declaring war without the consent of Turkey, but he thought that it would be fairer if this provision were made reciprocal, so that Turkey also should not be able to involve her allies in a war without their previous consent. He again said that the Grand Vizier had assured M. Novakovitch that Turkey would never recognize the annexation, and would demand the Autonomy of Bosnia and the Herzegovina under Turkish Suzerainty.

I called on M. Spalaikovitch yesterday afternoon and enquired how this matter was progressing. He then showed me the original draft of the Convention, written in French on paper marked "Sublime Porte," which contained six Articles approximately to the following effect: Article I began:—

"Les parties contractantes s'engagent à faire cause commune dans toute guerre que la Turquie ou la Serbie seraient dans la nécessité d'entreprendre ou de soutenir contre toute Puissance Etrangère." It went on to declare that each party should provide the requisite number of troops, up to the whole of their land and sea forces, and contained further provisions as to the chief Command etc. Article II provided for special conventions as to the forces to be employed in any particular case. In Article III it was laid down that the Convention would be of no effect if Servia declared war without the consent of Turkey. Article IV provided that if war had broken out neither contracting party could make peace without the consent of the other. Article V dealt with the question of keeping troops in readiness during one year after the signature of peace, while Article VI stipulated that the Convention was to be secret, and fixed its duration (3 or 5 years), the date when it should come into force, etc.

I noticed that all mention of Montenegro had been dropped, but M. Spalaikovitch told me that General Vukotitch had now gone to Constantinople to negotiate a parallel Convention between Turkey and Montenegro.

He went on to say that Servia had proposed several amendments to this draft, of which the following were the most important: Article III to be made reciprocal, so that neither Servia nor Turkey could declare war without the consent of the other; a stipulation to be introduced limiting the effect of the Convention to Europe; and, as the third and most important amendment proposed by Servia, that Turkey and Servia should engage that neither of them would accept any proposed solution of the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina without previous agreement with the other.

The last amendment had apparently been M. Spalaikovitch's own idea, and he had telegraphed to M. Pashitch and M. Milovanovitch before proposing it. Both had agreed cordially at once, although it was of course incompatible with the latter's scheme for territorial compensation by a rectification of the Bosnian frontier, Turkey having repeatedly declared that she would not recognize the annexation. M. Spalaikovitch seemed to think that this Convention would enable Turkey, Servia and Montenegro to present a solid front in maintaining at the Conference, if it took place, the Turkish programme for the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina under Turkish Suzerainty. If no Conference met the question would remain open and neither Turkey nor the Servian States would recognize the annexation.

The Servian amendments had already been submitted to the Porte, and the Grand Vizier had told M. Novakovitch on the 6th Instant that they would probably be accepted. M. Spalaikovitch expected to learn the definitive answer of the Turkish Government to-day, and, in case it was favourable M. Novakovitch would be provided with Full Powers at once and the Convention would be signed as soon as possible.

In answer to my enquiry M. Spalaikovitch explained that in case of a defensive war the obligation of the Convention would be unconditional, and that the stipulations of Article III would only apply if war were declared by one of the contracting parties.

I pointed out that this Convention, if signed, would involve Servia in war with Bulgaria if the latter attacked Turkey. M. Spalaikovitch replied that the Servian Government quite realized this but were ready to undertake the responsibility as they would thereby safeguard their nationality in Macedonia. I then asked whether he thought that these negotiations were not known at Vienna and Sofia; to which question he replied that the Turks could keep a secret very well if they desired to do so. He admitted that he had shown the draft Convention to the Russian Minister here, and I understood also, but may be mistaken, that M. Milovanovitch had mentioned the matter to Sir Charles Hardinge while in London.⁽²⁾

There can, I think, be no doubt that this Convention, if really concluded, would greatly strengthen Servia's defensive position as against Austria-Hungary, especially if the alliance were ultimately joined by Bulgaria. The advantage to Turkey is less obvious, as in case of a Bulgarian advance into Macedonia Servia could be paralyzed by Austria, and Turkey would in these circumstances be unable to assist her allies.

It is difficult to believe that with their excellent sources of information the Austrian Government are ignorant of these negotiations, and there is a suspicion of unreality about them which is not lessened by the confiding manner in which M. Spalaikovitch communicated the matter to me. The Austrians may possibly consider that the Convention will have no practical value and may therefore be ignored, but it would be a misfortune for Servia if they decided to forestall it by a "punitive expedition" which would cripple the Military and financial resources of Servia for ten years to come.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

⁽²⁾ [Marginal notes by Sir C. Hardinge and Sir E. Grey. "This is so. He mentioned it, I think, to Sir E. Grey and to me. I cannot remember whether he then said that it was to be *offensive* as well as *defensive*.—C. H.

My recollection is very vague on this point.—E. G."]

No. 441.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

London, November 10, 1908.

In the course of general conversation to-day Benckendorff told me he had received a private letter from Iswolsky who was evidently in low spirits about his reception in Berlin.

The Germans had been very stiff: they had told Iswolsky practically nothing except that they were going to support Austria; and, generally, he had received the impression that the Germans were in distinctly ill-humour with regard to Russia, and very much changed in their feeling towards her. He found that the Reval visit still rankled.

I told Benckendorff that this talk in Germany about being "ringed-in" was nonsense. Germany had two allies in Europe. France and Russia had one each: namely, each other. We had our agreements with France and Russia, which were public to the whole world. Germany had stood in the middle of Europe, with two

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

allies and the strongest Army in the world, and no one dreamt of attacking her. We were the only Power against whom Germany could invent even a fiction about attack without being completely ridiculous, and of course we had not the least intention of attacking her. She could invent such a fiction about us only because we were the one Power that was out of her reach.

Benckendorff went on to say that he had an impression that, in some way or other, Germany's alliance with Austria had been extended, and was now construed to cover the Balkans in a way which it had not done before.

Then Benckendorff told me that he was going to be very indiscreet, and asked me what England would do supposing a crisis arose in the Balkans and Germany took the part of Austria as her ally?

I said it was no good for me to say anything on such a matter unless I was authorised by the Cabinet to do so, and it was impossible for me to ask the Cabinet to consider such a contingency or to come to a decision with regard to it. For the last week, I had been considering another contingency: what we should do if Germany attacked France in connection with the Casablanca incident. The French had not, I thought, been seriously alarmed about this; they had not asked us any questions; and the incident was now settled. He would have seen how strong the feeling of the English Press had been against any aggression upon France. I had always felt that if Germany fastened war upon France in connection with Morocco, the world would say that France was being attacked because she had made friends with us, and for us to fold our hands and look on would not be a very respectable part.

But in all these questions it was impossible to come to a decision beforehand: so much depended upon how the quarrel came, and who was the aggressor. British sympathy would naturally be against the aggressor in any war.

I asked Benckendorff what Russia would have done if there had been war between France and Germany about Morocco.

He replied that he had not read the terms of the alliance with France, but he knew that they were very wide.

I then asked him what the action of France would be if Austria and Russia came to blows about the Balkans, and Germany supported Austria.

In such an event, he said, of course France would be brought in, and all four Powers would be involved.—But, should such a crisis arise, he was optimistic enough to think that sharp, decisive action on our part would keep the peace. If the British Government were at once to ask for a vote of credit from the House of Commons: he thought that would make the whole difference between peace and war.

I concluded, as I had begun, by saying that it was not to be expected that a Cabinet would come to a decision on a question of this kind except under the pressure of a crisis. I could not submit such a question to my Colleagues unless it became urgent: and it was no good for me to say anything unless I was authorised to do so by them.

Benckendorff ended by asking me not to forget what he had told me about the unfavourable impression made upon Iswolsky by his visit to Berlin.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

No. 442.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 39495/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, November 13, 1908.

Tel. (No. 593.)

D. 3 P.M.

Your Tel[egram] No. 252 (of Nov[ember] 12).⁽¹⁾

There is I imagine no doubt that the Railway and Eastern Roumelian tribute must form essential part of basis on which amount is calculated. But it appears that

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

Turks have been paying £100,000 a year to Council of the Debt for the last 29 years to represent the Bulgarian tribute, which is part of the Debt's security. Turks have more than once applied to the Powers in this period to have tribute fixed as contemplated by Article IX of Treaty of Berlin. Powers have never fixed it but the £100,000 has been exacted from Turkey and paid by her regularly.

It seems to us that Turkey must at least be freed from this charge, which might be done by Bulgaria taking over the portion of the Debt which the charge represents.

I think something more should be paid to compensate Turkey for the payments on account of this charge since the Treaty of Berlin.

Roughly I think the total amount which Bulgaria should be asked to pay is something between 5 and 10 millions.

In the first instance I should suggest consulting the French Gov[ernment] owing to their interest in Turkish Debt and Bulgarian Loans, which gives them intimate knowledge of finance of both countries and when we have French views the question should be discussed with the other Cabinets. Ask M. Iswolsky whether he approves generally of these views and this procedure.

No. 443.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, November 13, 1908.

F.O. 39596/31738/08/44A.

D. 6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 24.) Very Confidential.

R. 8 P.M.

I have to-day seen the amended draft of the Turco-Servian Military Convention. All the Servian amendments have been accepted by the Turkish Government, but on 10th November a Turkish amendment was proposed to the effect that in case of a victorious war against Bulgaria the conquered territory should be divided between Serbia and Turkey, the former taking the western, the latter the eastern, portion, and that any war indemnity should be divided equally.

(? Servian Government) cannot possibly agree to this amendment, their objections being: firstly, that the Convention must be general and not directed against a particular State; secondly, that an Article hostile to Bulgaria would render Convention useless as a basis for a wider coalition of the Balkan States as contemplated from the outset by both Turkey and Servia; thirdly, that Europe would never consent to a dismemberment of Bulgaria or to Turkish dominion being reimposed on Christian districts; and fourthly, that equal division of war indemnity is already provided for in Article 8 of draft.

Servian Government fear that this totally unacceptable proposal has been instigated by those who wish to wreck the negotiations. They hope that when the proper moment arrives, which they will indicate, His Majesty's Government will, if necessary, support Servian objections to the proposed Article, and use their influence at Constantinople to persuade Turkey to accept Convention without it; but meanwhile they beg that His Majesty's Ambassador will not refer to matter lest Turkish Government should consider that Servian Government had committed an indiscretion in communicating these secret negotiations to me.

(Sent to Constantinople.)

No. 444.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 39599/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 42.)

Foreign Office, November 13, 1908.

Russian Government have instructed their Minister to examine with his colleagues what exactly are the circumstances to which the attention of the Servian Government should be drawn with the view of diminishing the tension actually existing in its relations with the Cabinet of Vienna. You are authorized to co-operate.

No. 445.

M. Isvolski to the Russian Minister at Belgrade.

Communication from Russian Embassy, November 13, 1908.)

F.O. 39599/31738/08/44.

Tel. Secret.

Le 30 Octobre (12 Novembre), 1908.

A la suite de notre circulaire les Gouvernements de Grande Bretagne, d'Italie, de France et d'Allemagne se sont déclarés disposés à charger leurs représentants à Belgrade de se mettre en rapports entre eux ainsi qu'avec Vous conformément aux vues du Gouvernement IMPÉRIAL.

En conséquence il serait, nous semble-t-il, désirable que conjointement avec Vos collègues Vous examiniez la question de savoir quelles sont exactement les circonstances sur lesquelles il y aurait lieu d'attirer l'attention du Gouvernement Serbe en vue de diminuer la tension existant actuellement dans ses rapports avec le Cabinet de Vienne.

Les données énumérées dans la circulaire du Baron d'Aehrenthal du 6 Novembre pourraient servir de point de départ pour Votre examen.

No. 446.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 39572/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 438.)

Foreign Office, November 14, 1908.

R.

D. 3-30 P.M.

Following is substance of my reply⁽¹⁾ to last Turkish communication:

I took note of opinion of Porte that Conference should cover not only immediate causes of meeting but their indirect consequences. This would include financial obligation of Bulgarian and E[astern] Roumelia towards Turkey.

I was ready to give definite assurance that any compensation to Servia and Montenegro should not be obtained by means of any sacrifice on the part of Turkey and I suggested that Turkey in announcing her adhesion to the programme should invite a similar declaration from the other Signatory Powers.

I could not admit that Art[icle]s 23 and 61 were abrogated by mere fact of establishment of new régime and Powers might require guarantees of maintenance of reform but I would bear in mind Porte's wishes.

I was favourably disposed to consider any proposals in regard to Capitulations, but I thought any increase of customs should be entirely free from any previously existing lien on customs revenues and destined for support and development of

⁽¹⁾ [Communicated to Rifaat Pasha, November 13, 1908, in reply to a communication from him of November 11.]

reformed administration, otherwise I could not justify sacrifice which British trade w[oul]d be called upon to make.

When questions for submission to Conference approached settlement I should welcome a comm[unicatio]n of the views of Porte regarding Crete.

In giving this reply to Turkish Amb[assado]r I told him that there seemed to be no reason now why Turkey should not state her views on the suggested programme for a Conference to the other Powers.

No. 447.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 39596/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, November 14, 1908.

Tel. (No. 43.) Confidential.

D. 4:30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 24 (of Nov[ember] 13).⁽¹⁾

Convention would seem to be for offensive and defensive alliance. If so it could not meet with our approval since its object would certainly be regarded as aggressive. H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would however view with sympathy any arrangement of a purely defensive character, come to by the Balkan States with Turkey for their mutual defence and against possible future encroachments.

These views are not for communication to the Servian Gov[ernmen]t but for your own use in discussing the matter.

Repeated to Constantinople (No. 440) November 14, 1908.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 496, No. 443.]

No. 448.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 39987/31738/08/44A.

Belgrade, D. November 14, 1908, 11:50 P.M.⁽¹⁾

Tel. (No. 25.)

R. November 15, 1908, 7 A.M.

Your tel[egram]s Nos. 41⁽²⁾ and 42⁽³⁾.

We met this evening and agreed unanimously to submit following protocol to our Gov[ernmen]ts for approval:

“Les ministres d'Allemagne, de France, de la Grande Bretagne, de Russie et le Chargé d'Affaires d'Italie s'étant réunis le 15 Novembre 1908 à la Légation de Russie, et ayant pris connaissance des points spécifiés dans le [*sic*] circulaire du Gouvernement Autrichien en date du 6 de ce mois:

Estiment qu'il importerait tout d'abord primo de recommander au Gouv[ernemen]t Serbe le retrait des troupes échelonnées le long de la frontière austro-hongroise; et second d'attirer son attention sur les conséquences désastreuses (?que) pourrait avoir la formation éventuelle sur son territoire de bandes dirigées contre la Bosnie.

Ils croient qu'il conviendrait de se borner pour le moment aux deux observations précitées, pour ne point surexciter, en Serbie, une opinion facilement inquiète.

(¹) [*Sic*. The wording of the telegram suggests that the dates are really 15th and 16th respectively.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 491, No. 437.]

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 497, No. 444.]

Ils constatent avec satisfaction la fin du boycottage des magasins Austro-Hongrois et la cessation presque complète des manifestations de la rue ainsi que des violences de la Presse qui eussent pû revêtir un caractère de provocation.”⁽⁴⁾

⁽⁴⁾ [Terms approved by Sir Edward Grey in Telegram to Mr. Whitehead. No. 47 of November 17. On the 18th the representation was made to the Servian Government by each diplomat separately but in immediate succession, *v. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 274-5.*]

No. 449.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Peru, November 16, 1908.

F.O. 40059/31738/08/44.

D. 8.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 394.)

R. 10 P.M.

My telegram No. 392⁽¹⁾ and your tel[egram] to Belgrade No. 43.⁽²⁾

Grand Vizier gave me to understand to-day that the Convention proposed as against Austria has been dropped, as suggested in my above-mentioned telegram, and that negotiations now proceeding with Servia were only intended to provide against the possible contingency of the war party in Bulgaria obtaining the upper hand, and making attack on Turkey. His intention was that it should be purely of a defensive character.

His Highness, while convinced of the peaceful intentions of Prince Ferdinand and his Government, had to calculate with the possibility of Bulgarian people acting towards the Prince as they had done towards his predecessor, and possibly provoking a war.

General Voukovitch, Montenegrin Special Envoy, arrived to-day with a view to submitting proposals for a (? military) Convention against Austria, but I understand from the Porte that he is not likely to get much encouragement.

(Sent to Sophia and Belgrade.)

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 498, No. 447.]

No. 450.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Carnegie.

F.O. 40962/31738/08/44.

(No. 136.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 16, 1908.

The Austrian Ambassador called this afternoon at the Foreign Office to express the thanks of Baron d'Aehrenthal for the counsels of moderation which His Majesty's Government had given at Belgrade. H[is] E[xc]cellency asked Sir Charles Hardinge, who received him, what were his views on the situation.

Sir Charles Hardinge replied that the news which His Majesty's Government had received of military preparations in Austria were disquieting and informed H[is] E[xc]cellency of the substance of your telegram No. 80, of the 15th inst[ant],⁽¹⁾ adding that it would make it difficult for His Majesty's Government to urge the Servian Government to demobilize their forces, if the news of the Austrian military measures were confirmed.

The Austrian Ambassador said that he could assure Sir Charles Hardinge that his Government would take no action against Servia unless they were attacked, and, if any measures had been taken, they must be of a purely defensive nature.

He then read a long despatch from Baron d'Aehrenthal, arguing that Austria-Hungary had no reason to take over a portion of the Ottoman Debt. He said that no

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

mention had been made of any financial obligation in the Treaty of Berlin, and that the expenses incurred in the occupation would far surpass any sum that might be fixed upon as forming that part of the Ottoman Debt which should fall to the two Provinces. Baron d'Aehrenthal concluded his despatch by stating that he was studying the economic advantages which he might be able to offer to Turkey.

Sir Charles Hardinge pointed out to Count Mensdorff that there was naturally no mention of the Ottoman Debt in the Articles of the Treaty of Berlin relating to Bosnia and Herzegovina, since the two Provinces till the other day formed part of the Ottoman Empire, and that while talking of the expenditure incurred by Austria no mention had been made of the revenues of the two provinces.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 451.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Reilly.

F.O. 40059/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, November 17, 1908.

Tel. (No. 3.)

D. 6 P.M.

Sir G. Lowther reports that Montenegrin special Envoy has arrived to submit proposals for a Military Convention against Austria but is not likely to get much encouragement.⁽¹⁾

You should discourage any idea of an offensive alliance against Austria.

Repeated to Vienna, (No. 184) November 17, 1908.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 499, No. 449.]

No. 452.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 41115/31738/08/44.

(No. 375.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 17, 1908.

The Russian Ambassador called at the Foreign Office to-day and read to Sir C. Hardinge a telegram recording an interview with Monsieur Pasitch the Servian special Envoy to St. Petersburg.

The salient points were the following:—

The Russian Government would press for the question of the recognition of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina being submitted to the Conference without prejudging its decisions.

The Russian Government would give their diplomatic support to Serbia provided that Serbia did not embark on an aggressive policy or assume a provocative attitude, but that Serbia could not count on her armed support.

The Russian Government were in favour of an *entente* between Serbia and Turkey provided that it was not directed against another Slav country.

Monsieur Pasitch was said to have been satisfied with these assurances and to have promised to repeat them faithfully at Belgrade.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 40793/31738/08/44A.

(No. 525.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. November 18, 1908.

R. November 23, 1908.

I called on M. Iswolsky this morning and said that I understood that the Austro-Hungarian Government had replied to the communication which he had made to them through Count Berchtold in regard to the points with which the Conference might deal; and that the Vienna Cabinet, while expressing generally its accord with most of the points, had made certain reservations in respect to the questions of annexation and of the advantages to be accorded to Servia and Montenegro.

His Excellency replied that such was the case. Baron d'Aehrenthal had stated that he could not admit a discussion in the Conference of the question of annexation: that he would arrive at an understanding with Turkey on that point, and that such an agreement would be submitted to the Powers for ratification and for the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin. M. Iswolsky said that he could not admit this contention. No agreement as far as he was aware had been concluded with Turkey, nor did he know if any agreement were likely to be realized. But even if it were, he could not agree that the Powers should assemble simply to ratify an understanding arrived at between two of the Parties to a Treaty. He took his stand on what occurred in 1871, and he did not comprehend why Austria should decline to follow a course to which at the time she had given her assent, and which had been adopted by Russia.

I remarked that I believed that the Austrian argument was that in 1871 Russia had wished to divest herself of an onerous obligation imposed on her by Treaty while Austria was in no way violating any Treaty stipulation.

M. Iswolsky said that he had heard of this argument, but that it would not hold water. Russia in 1871 had wished to be reinvested with rights she had formerly possessed, while Austria had thought fit to create for herself new rights. Both by the Treaty of Berlin and by the subsequent Agreement of 1879 with Turkey, she had admitted the sovereign rights of the Sultan over the two provinces, and now she was substituting for the sovereignty of the Sultan that of the Emperor Franz Josef: and she also asserted that the Powers should not even examine and discuss the question, but accept it as an accomplished fact. The position was untenable. He intended to discuss the matter further in a courteous and friendly spirit with Vienna, but he could not agree with the position assumed by Baron d'Aehrenthal. Moreover Article 25 could not be simply abrogated; some other stipulation would have to be introduced in its place.

I observed that so far as I could gather Russian public opinion would not accept that Russia should go into what was termed a "whitewashing" Conference. His Excellency said that this undoubtedly was so.

I asked if he intended to communicate a copy of the Austrian reply to the other Powers. M. Iswolsky said that he thought, out of courtesy, he ought to ask the consent of the Austrian Government before doing so. He might perhaps issue a circular to the Powers. I enquired what view he took of the assertion by Austria that she would only consider economical advantages to be accorded to Servia and Montenegro. He replied that he would probably make no mention of that point in his reply to the Vienna Cabinet, as it was one, in his opinion, which should be considered in the Conference.

He begged me to treat what he had told me as confidential, as his remarks were merely preliminary, and he had not fully thought out the terms of his reply to the Austrian communication.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 454.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 40468/31738/08/44.

(No. 486.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 19, 1908.

The Turkish Amb[assado]r informed me to-day through Sir C. Hardinge that, his Gov[ernmen]t, having in accordance with my advice, informed the Powers of their views with regard to the draft programme of the proposed Conference,⁽¹⁾ wished to express their thanks for my friendly suggestion. They desired at the same time to state that any increase of the Customs duties arising out of a modification of the present tariff would be devoted to meeting the general expenses of the State and would not be subject to any previously existing liens. H[is] E[xcellency] was asked how the S[ublime] Porte proposed to escape from the provisions of the Decree of Mouharrem respecting increased Customs duties, to which he replied that he did not know what was intended but hoped some means might be found.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 498, No. 446.]

No. 455.

*Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.**Belgrade, November 20, 1908.*

F.O. 40592/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 27.) Confidential.

D. 5.45 P.M.

R. 7.30 P.M.

Turco-Servian Military Convention.

In place of Turkish proposal mentioned in my telegram No. 24,⁽¹⁾ Servian Government suggested a simple Article merely stating that neither Contracting Party would recognize annexation of Bosnia or independence of Bulgaria without previous agreement. To this no definite reply has been received, but Servian Government learn that the Grand Vizier has told Montenegrin Envoy that owing to the indiscretions committed at Belgrade, which led to the intervention of His Majesty's Ambassador against the Convention, the matter must be dropped for the present. Russian Government have also pointed out to the Servian Minister at St. Petersburg that they could not support a Convention directed against Bulgaria.

Servian Government think that last proposals deprive the Convention of any offensive character, and still hope that the Grand Vizier may change his mind.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 496, No. 443.]

No. 456.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 40467/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 264.)

Foreign Office, November 20, 1908.

D. 6 P.M.

Turkish Gov[ernmen]t have communicated to the Great Powers their views as to the basis of discussion to which the deliberations of the proposed Conference should be confined. These views in the main coincide with those already expressed by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t.

The Turkish Gov[ernmen]t will however only admit discussion of the question of advantages to be granted to Servia and Montenegro on the express condition to be accepted beforehand by the Powers that such advantages, whatever their nature may be, are not to be obtained at the expense of Turkey. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t are ready to give a definite assurance in this sense.

The Turkish Gov[ernmen]t desire to reserve the discussion of the Cretan question with the four Protecting Powers till a later date, after the settlement of the questions contained in the Programme of the Conference. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t, being anxious for the maintenance of tranquillity in the island of Crete, and having no desire to exert pressure on the S[ublime] Porte while other questions of importance are under discussion, propose to express the hope that, as soon as the Conference shall have met and undertaken its allotted task, the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t will lose no time in communicating to the Protecting Powers their views as to the solution of the Cretan question.⁽¹⁾

Ascertain the views of the Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited on these points and the Turkish proposals generally.

Repeated to Rome (No. 190). St. Petersburg (No. 606), Berlin (No. 178), Vienna (No. 191), Constantinople (No. 449). November 20, 1908.

⁽¹⁾ [This paragraph was sent to Paris, Rome and St. Petersburg only.]

No. 457.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 42545/31738/08/44A.

(No. 534.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. November 22, 1908.

R. December 7, 1908.

In obedience to the instructions conveyed to me in your telegram No. 606⁽¹⁾ of the 20th instant, I spoke to Monsieur Iswolsky to-day on the subject of the Turkish proposals in regard to the matters which it is suggested that the Conference should discuss, whenever that body may assemble; and I enquired of His Excellency what were his views in respect to the communication which he had received from the Sublime Porte.

Monsieur Iswolsky replied that he had not really had time to study the Turkish communication as he had been during the last few days entirely occupied with the reply which the Austro-Hungarian Government had given to the nine points of the programme.

He told me privately, but there is no objection to my reporting the matter officially in this despatch, as it will not reach your hands for some time, that he had handed to-day to Count Berchtold his answer to the Austrian note. He intended to communicate a copy of it confidentially to you and Monsieur Pichon on the 24th instant, as by that date his reply would have reached Vienna. He said that he had limited himself to the one point of annexation, and had given Baron d'Aehrenthal clearly to understand that the Russian Government could not enter a Conference for the simple purpose of ratifying what had occurred. He based himself on the Protocols of the 1871 Conference, and maintained that the question of the annexation must be discussed and examined; and that Article 25 could not be summarily excised from the Treaty.

I asked him what would be his course if Baron d'Aehrenthal continued to maintain his stiff attitude in declining to admit any discussion of the act of annexation. He replied that he would probably address a Circular to the Powers recounting what had passed and explaining fully the reasons which had governed the attitude of Russia. He must, of course, await a reply from Baron d'Aehrenthal, but he seemed to doubt if the latter would be disposed to modify the views which he had taken, as he believed that Baron d'Aehrenthal did not desire that a Conference should assemble. Public opinion here would never admit that Russia should accept without any demur a modification by one Power alone of Treaty stipulations.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

I asked Monsieur Iswolsky whether he did not think that we were drifting into an *impasse*, and that the prospects of a Conference were becoming dimmer. He did not deny this, but seemed to think that a good deal might be effected by exchange of views between the Cabinets as to modifying some of the Articles of the Treaty of Berlin.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 458.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Pera, November 23, 1908.

F.O. 41015/31788/08/44.

D. 7.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 400.)

R. 10.5 P.M.

Boycotting of Austrian ships and goods has recently gained in strength, and Austrian Ambassador, both yesterday and to-day, made strong representations to Grand Vizier, insisting that orders should be given to custom-house porters, as they are practically Government servants. Grand Vizier has given orders, but popular feeling is too strong for them to be carried out. German Ambassador is supporting his Austrian colleague.

Austrian Ambassador is still making settlement of boycott question a *sine qua non* of any negotiations respecting Bosnia and Herzegovina.

No. 459.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 41709/31788/08/44A.

(No. 88.) Confidential.

Belgrade, D. November 24, 1908.

Sir,

R. November 30, 1908.

About a month ago, a well-known Danish journalist, Herr Franz von Jessen, arrived at Belgrade bringing me letters of introduction from Sir Alan Johnstone and Mr. Vaughan. He has since been travelling in the Sandjak of Novi-Bazar, Montenegro and Bosnia, and called upon me yesterday before leaving for Sofia and Constantinople.

Herr von Jessen expressed to me in the strongest possible terms his indignation at the oppressive nature of the Austrian Administration in Bosnia as exercised towards the Orthodox and Mussulman population. He stated that the police had a perfectly free hand, that they could make regulations as they pleased without any legal sanction, and punish by imprisonment and fine any person who even unwittingly transgressed them, without as much as the semblance of judicial proceedings.

He had met privately a few of the Orthodox and Mussulman Notables at Sarayevo, and after hearing their complaints had asked them why they did not protest against this state of affairs. Their answer was that they were bound and gagged, and it was therefore impossible for them to make their voice heard. They had neither the right of assembly nor of free Speech, and their press was under so severe a censorship that it could not represent their feelings. As an instance of the latter Herr Jessen told me that the newspaper "Srpska Retch" of Sarayevo had five responsible editors, all of whom were in prison while he was there. A short time ago this paper had ventured to reproduce, without any comment, a paragraph in the Vienna "Neue Freie Presse" (which I remember seeing) in which it was stated that a certain degree of autonomy might possibly be conceded to Bosnia and the Herzegovina. For this reproduction the paper was at once confiscated and the Editor imprisoned.

The Notables had said further than an insurrection was impossible because they were absolutely without arms. The mere possession of a revolver was punished summarily by three months' imprisonment, and in any case it would be hopeless to

attempt resistance with an Austrian garrison of 80,000 men permanently in the country. Moreover the system of police spies was so highly developed that no combined action could be prepared.

Herr von Jessen complained of the indignities to which he had been subjected by the Austrian Authorities, his passports having been examined and his baggage thoroughly searched not only on entering Austrian territory from Montenegro, but every time he moved from one place to another within the occupied provinces. He also said that when he drove down from Cetinje to Cattaro in the dusk, his carriage had been followed by the searchlights of the Austrian Squadron in the harbour, and that one of his colleagues, who had done the last part of the road on foot, had been stopped five times by Austrian patrols. In general he could assert that the state of Military preparations on the two sides of the Montenegrin frontier was the exact opposite of what the Austrian papers described.

I was particularly struck by Herr von Jessen's account of his impressions in Bosnia, because it goes far beyond anything I have heard from Members of the Government here and from other Servians who have connections in the occupied provinces. Allowing for a certain amount of anti-Austrian bias, his description of the situation explains the nervousness of the Austrian Government in regard to the possible formation of bands in Serbia, and the confidence of the Servian and Montenegrin Governments that an insurrection in Bosnia and the Herzegovina would immediately break out if they could only manage to furnish the Orthodox and Mussulman population there with arms.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

No. 460.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, November 25, 1906.

F.O. 41267/31738/08/44A.

D. 12.18 P.M.

Tel. (No. 69.)

R. 1.20 P.M.

Your telegram No. 178.⁽¹⁾

Having seen Chancellor, M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] gave me an answer yesterday. H[is] E[xc]cellency said that it seems to be universally agreed that no further sacrifices should be demanded from Turkey. I asked whether that meant that the German Gov[ernment] would give definite assurance desired. He replied that, in opinion of the Imperial Gov[ernment], there was no reason for such assurance at present as it was not even known whether a Conference would take place. I said that assurance would smooth road of Conference and that time was being lost. H[is] E[xc]cellency replied that it was a matter of indifference to German Gov[ernment] whether Conference took place or not. I said that might be so but that other Powers attached importance to it: Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] has himself pointed out to me probability of dangers if no Conference was held. H[is] E[xc]cellency said situation was changed and the Turks were now being unreasonable. He mentioned boycott and Grand Vizier's proposal that Provinces should be made an independent state. That, he said, was not the way to negotiate. He suggested that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] should advise Ottoman Gov[ernment] to be more reasonable, Germany could not do this as being Austria's ally his advice would be regarded with suspicion. I said that after all Turkey was offended party and that in my opinion it was for Austria-Hungary to make things as easy as possible for Ottoman Gov[ernment] by making proposals which Turkish public opinion would allow them to accept. Germany could render good service by advising her ally to that effect. H[is] E[xc]cellency said that Germany's attitude was well drawn; she would join Conference under Austria-

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 502-3, No. 456, repeated to Berlin as No. 178.]

Hungary's conditions, otherwise not. Let Turkey come to an understanding with Austria-Hungary and Bulgaria and there was no special necessity for Conference. Turkey would have said "Goodbye" to the Provinces and Bulgaria and things could remain as they were now. I asked him whether it was really opinion of German Gov[ernmen]t that there was no danger in leaving a question involving a re-arrangement of Treaty of Berlin indefinitely open, and that a Conference which might ratify understandings and regularise situation once and for all was a matter of no importance! He replied that Conference would be advantageous but not necessary. Whether it would take place or not depended on attitude of Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t. I could not move him from this position.

No. 461.

Mr. Carnegie to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, November 25, 1908.

F.O. 41283/31738/08/44A.

D. 6:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 90.)

R. 8:15 P.M.

My telegram No. 86 of 21st November.⁽¹⁾

I attended the reception of Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day. His Excellency told me he had received, and was considering, Turkish communication respecting Conference, and hoped to send me his views very soon. He was prepared to show most friendly spirit towards the Turkish Government, but, as he has intimated at Constantinople, their authorities must first make some attempt to end boycott. They could do much in this direction, but had done nothing. He would have some remarks to offer on Turkey's reservation respecting the advantages to be given to Serbia and Montenegro. He did not see why Austria-Hungary should not make a similar reservation in regard to Bosnia.

On my remarking that according to newspapers the prospects of the Conference appeared brighter, his Excellency said he thought that there was less zeal for it now at St. Petersburg. He had received a reply from the Russian Government to his last communication, but could not tell me its contents as Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs wished to keep the negotiations between the two Governments secret. One point he would mention, however, as he did not understand it. Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs desired, as he himself did, that an exact formula should be found before the Conference for each of nine questions contained in programme, but he insisted nevertheless that a full discussion of each of them should be allowed at the Conference. This was in Baron d'Aehrenthal's view a contradiction, for once formulas were found further discussions were unnecessary and undesirable, as they might lead to break-up of Conference.

I gather that his Excellency is anxious that Conference should take place.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 462.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 41711/31738/08/44A.

(No. 90.) Confidential.

Belgrade, D. November 25, 1908.

Sir,

R. November 30, 1908.

In my telegram No. 24 of the 13th Instant,⁽¹⁾ I had the honour to report that the negotiations for a Military Convention between Serbia and Turkey had entered upon a more difficult phase by the unexpected proposal of the Grand Vizier to introduce into it an Article plainly hostile to Bulgaria, and I recorded the objections to this proposal entertained by the Serbian Government and their determination not to accept

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 496, No. 443.]

it. In communicating the above to me M. Spalaikovitch had expressed the hope that when the proper moment arrived, which he thought it would be best for the Servian Government to indicate, His Majesty's Government would use their influence at Constantinople to induce the Grand Vizier to conclude the Convention without the objectionable Article, but that meanwhile His Majesty's Ambassador should not refer to the further course of the negotiations, lest His Highness should consider that Serbia had been guilty of a breach of confidence.

M. Spalaikovitch on that occasion showed me the amended draft of the Convention, as it stood before the last Turkish proposal, and said that in that form it was exactly what Serbia desired. The first Article stated that in case of aggression against Turkey in Europe or against Serbia each of the Contracting Parties would render Military assistance to the other, and the Commanders of troops on both sides would act in complete accord. Article II provided that Special Conventions should be made in each case to fix the number of troops to be supplied by each side, on the understanding that if necessary this should extend to the whole of the Military and Naval forces of the country in question. Article III laid down that previous agreement between the two Contracting Parties was necessary before any offensive action could be undertaken by either of them (The order of the two last Articles had not yet been finally determined). Article IV stated that neither of the two Contracting Parties should be entitled to make peace without the consent of the other. Article V provided that a certain number of troops should be kept in readiness by both parties for one year after the conclusion of peace. Article VI laid down that the Convention was to be secret and should not be communicated to any foreign Cabinet. Article VII embodied the principal Servian amendment, providing that neither party should agree to a solution of the question of Bosnia and the Herzegovina without the consent of the other, and that Turkey engaged to grant facilities to Servian religious and educational institutions in her dominions, and to Servian commerce and means of communication to Ottoman Sea-ports. Article VIII stated that in case of a victorious campaign the advantages obtained should be divided equally. The Convention was to be concluded for five years, and to come into force ten days after signature.

I saw M. Spalaikovitch again on the 18th Instant and asked him how the negotiations were progressing. He replied that he had instructed M. Novakovitch to explain that Serbia could not possibly agree to the Turkish amendment regarding Bulgaria, but that he had suggested, in order to meet the Grand Vizier's wishes, that one of the following three courses might be adopted viz.: (1) that as an equivalent for the clause respecting the occupied provinces in Article VII a provision should be inserted stating that Serbia engaged not to recognize the independence of Bulgaria unless Turkey had agreed to do so; (2) that an Article should be drafted by which Turkey engaged not to recognize the annexation without the consent of Serbia, and the latter reciprocally engaged not to recognize the independence of Bulgaria without the consent of Turkey; or (3) that an Article should be framed simply stating that the two Contracting Parties engaged not to recognize either the annexation or the independence without previous agreement.

I said that of these three versions the last seemed to me by far the best. Guided by your telegram No. 43 of the 14th⁽²⁾ Instant, but speaking merely in my own name, I also pointed out the advisability of omitting from the text of the Convention anything which might give it the character of an offensive alliance, and suggested that instead of the latest wording of Article III (or II) a modification of the earlier version (recorded in my Despatch No. 83 of November 10)⁽³⁾ should be reverted to, and the Article should stand approximately to the effect that each of the two Contracting Parties engaged not to declare war against any third Power without the previous consent of the other. This, I said, would have the appearance and indeed the effect of a guarantee of peace, whereas the other wording looked as if offensive action were contemplated.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 498, No. 447.]

(³) [*v. supra*, pp. 492-4, No. 440.]

M. Spalaikovitch agreed to this suggestion, and added incidentally that Serbia would be perfectly willing to recognize the independence of Bulgaria as soon as Turkey did so.

On the 20th Instant, M. Spalaikovitch read to me a telegram from M. Novakovitch stating that the Grand Vizier had informed General Vukotitch, the Montenegrin Special Envoy, that owing to the indiscretions of which the Servian Government had been guilty at Belgrade, which had led to the intervention of His Majesty's Ambassador against the Military Conventions, the idea of them must be dropped for the present. M. Novakovitch had previously submitted the alternative suggestions enumerated above, but the Grand Vizier had insisted upon his original proposal for an Article directed against Bulgaria, and the present position was that the Servian Special Envoy was awaiting a formal reply to his last suggestions in the hope that the Grand Vizier might still accept one of them. A telegram from the Servian Minister at St. Petersburg, recording a conversation with M. Teharikoff, had also made it clear that Russia would not support any Military Convention directed against Bulgaria.

I see from Sir G. Lowther's despatch No. 710 Secret of the 26th Ultimo⁽⁴⁾ that the Grand Vizier informed His Excellency of the nature of the proposed Military Convention in almost the same terms as M. Spalaikovitch used to me on the same day (see my telegram No. 19 of October 26th).⁽⁵⁾ By an indiscretion of the Servian Government, therefore, His Highness can only have meant the communication to me of the later Turkish proposal for an Article hostile to Bulgaria. M. Spalaikovitch does not feel certain whether the Grand Vizier intended from the first to insert this proposal at a suitable stage of the negotiations, hoping that Serbia in her need might be tempted to accept it, or whether the proposal was instigated, perhaps by Germany, with the object of wrecking the negotiations.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

P.S.—Since writing the above I have had a further visit from M. Spalaikovitch, during which he translated to me the greater part of M. Novakovitch's latest report on this subject, which had just arrived. M. Novakovitch seemed to have come to the conclusion that Great Britain, France and Russia were practically in agreement on three points, viz., (1) that they would recognize Bulgarian independence, (2) that they would endeavour to obtain from Austria some territorial compensation for Serbia and Montenegro, and (3) that they would allow Turkey to arrive at a solution of the Bosnian question by direct negotiations with Austria-Hungary. M. Spalaikovitch said that as regards the first of these three points Serbia would raise no objection. The second would be satisfactory to her if M. Novakovitch's impression were correct, but it was in direct contradiction to the language quite recently held to M. Grouitch by Sir Charles Hardinge. The third however involved a great danger to Servian interests unless some formal assurance could be obtained by the Convention that Turkey would not acquiesce in the annexation without either insisting on territorial compensation to Serbia and Montenegro such as would join them as buffer States between Turkey and Austria, or upon a guarantee that the status of the annexed provinces would be so regulated as to safeguard the national and religious development of their Servian population.

In M. Novakovitch's further negotiations at the Porte, Nouradoughian [*sic*] Effendi had pointed out that the proposed Article VII of the draft above described was foreign to the purpose of the Convention and that the first part of it could certainly not be accepted by Turkey, as it would tie her hands in negotiating with Austria-Hungary. As regards the second and third points in that Article he thought that those matters could more properly be regulated subsequently by an exchange of Notes. The Turkish Government had therefore proposed the following modifications in the draft:

(4) [Not reproduced. Its substance is given in Sir G. Lowther's telegram No. 365 of October 26, *supra*, p. 464, No. 404.]

(5) [*v. supra*, p. 465, No. 405.]

A preamble embodying most of Article I as stated above, but speaking of "agressions éventuelles." A new Article I approximately to the following effect: "In case aggression by Austria-Hungary against Serbia is to be feared, the Porte will use their good offices with the conflicting States and with the Great Powers for the purpose of preventing a definite rupture and war. If these efforts are of no avail, and if any other Power or Powers decide to make common cause with Serbia against Austria-Hungary, then Turkey will also join on their side and will engage to defend Servian territory. In any case Serbia engages not to declare war or to commence hostilities without having previously informed the Ottoman Government and obtained their consent." A new Article II stating that "The Contracting Parties agree that in case of an aggression of Bulgaria against either of them, or of provocations on her part calculated to endanger peace, troops in sufficient number will be sent by the one ally to take part in the defence of the territories of the other. The Commanders in Chief of the two Armies will concert as to the direction to be given to the Military operations and will act in complete accord." The old Article II then becomes III, and the rest of the draft remains unchanged, except that the former Article VII is entirely omitted and Article VIII therefore becomes Article VII.

In commenting on these proposals M. Spalaikovitch said that although the first part of Article I gave only very conditional support to Serbia, he would be in favour of accepting it because Turkey thereby engaged to range herself on the side opposed to Austria in a general European war. The last clause, however, Serbia could not accept unless some formal and written guarantee were given that her wishes in regard to Bosnia and the Herzegovina would be considered in any arrangement arrived at between Turkey and Austria-Hungary. He thought that an addition to this Article might reasonably be inserted, stating that "Turkey on her part will take into account the wishes of Serbia in regard to Bosnia and the Herzegovina, and will accept no solution of the Status of those provinces which does not either safeguard the fate of the Servian population there or afford territorial compensation to Serbia and Montenegro." He maintained that if the Conference met and recognized the Annexation, attempting to put off Serbia with trifling advantages such as the Danube Adriatic railway and a seat on the Danube Commission, the Article as it stood would render the Servian Government helpless, and they would either have to face a revolution within the country or declare war against Austria on their own account and in spite of the Convention.

I tried to point out to M. Spalaikovitch the folly of such a course, and said that I felt sure the Servian Government would be able to restrain the Chauvinistic Spirits in Serbia by explaining its futility. He continued to maintain, however, that revolution or war would be the only alternatives and asserted that Serbia could raise an insurrection in the occupied provinces and in other parts of the Empire with which the Austrian Government would find it difficult to cope.

In conclusion M. Spalaikovitch very earnestly begged that the above information should be considered as intended for His Majesty's Government only, and that the Turkish Government should on no account be allowed to suspect that it had been communicated to me. He thought that he might possibly give it to the Russian Minister also, but had not yet decided on this, and he certainly would not communicate it to any other of my colleagues. (*)

J. B. W.

(*) [On November 28, Mr. Whitehead telegraphed to Sir E. Grey (No. 28, D. 7-20 P.M., R. 10-5 P.M.) informing him that M. Milovanović had told him on the 27th that the Servian Government wished to submit some further modifications of the draft Convention. The most important of these was the addition of a new Article II binding the Porte "not to accept any settlement of the questions of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and particularly not to recognize Austro-Hungarian sovereignty over those provinces . . . except on condition that a strip of territory forming part of Bosnia and Herzegovina . . . shall be ceded . . . to Serbia and Montenegro . . ." The proposals further included a change in the old Article II which would become Article III.]

No. 463.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 41712/31738/08/44A.

(No. 91.) Confidential.

Sir,

*Belgrade, D. November 25, 1908.**R. November 30, 1908.*

I have the honour to forward to you herewith a Despatch, as marked in the margin, which I have received from Colonel Napier, Military Attaché to this Legation, giving the substance of a conversation with the Bulgarian Military Attaché on the subject of the relations between Turkey, Servia and Bulgaria.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Enclosure in No. 463.

Lieutenant-Colonel Napier to Mr. Whitehead.

(No. 8.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, November 18, 1908.

I have the honour to inform you that as the result of a conversation which I chanced to hold this afternoon with Major Gantchew, the Bulgarian Military Attaché, and judging from his own very forcibly expressed views, I have received the following impressions :

The Bulgarians are irritated with the Servians for entering into negotiations with Turkey without reference to Bulgaria, and therefore suspect that this alliance may be directed against Bulgaria.

They are in favour of an alliance with Servia and Turkey against Austria, but after the timorous and perfidious behaviour of Servia some time ago in backing out of a commercial alliance with Bulgaria directed against Austria, Bulgaria feels that it is not for her to make the first advances. There is however no reason why the two countries should not now come together.

Major Gantchew considers that the Macedonian question no longer exists and that Bulgaria is ready to join Servia without exacting any demands from her as the price of a friendship, which, though desirable for Bulgaria is absolutely essential to Servia.

Major Gantchew believes that the Servians will begin making up to the Austrians again if they are unsuccessful in obtaining anything from the Turks but that it will be quite useless for them to attempt to make any alliances either with Turkey or Austria without taking Bulgaria into account. Austria will make promises as before, but Servia will never really obtain anything of value from Austria.

Previous to this conversation, I have noticed during the last few days an increasing bitterness on the part of Major Gantchew, when speaking of the Servians, which I had hitherto been unable to account for.

I have, &c.

H. D. NAPIER, *Lt. Colonel,*
Military Attaché.

MINUTES.

The Bulgarian was not far wrong in thinking there was an idea of an alliance against Bulgaria or in saying it was useless for Servia to make alliances without taking Bulgaria into account.

J. A. C. T.

R. P. M.

C. H.

We have said the same to Servia.

E. G.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson :—

Foreign Office, November 25, 1908.

I am much obliged to you for your letters of the 16th.

As regards the attitude of the British Plenipotentiaries at the Berlin Congress, it is quite possible that they were in favour of annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina in the year 1878, and that they gave expression to their feelings in that sense; but they did not and could not commit us *to-day*, or bind us to anything except what was actually signed there at that time. As, however, it may be possible that some reference was made to this subject by Lord Salisbury in his correspondence with the late Queen, I have asked the present Lord Salisbury to look amongst his father's papers, and to see whether he can trace anything of the kind in his correspondence with the Queen. Had there been any such definite committal, mention of it would be certain to have been made in his letters to the late Queen.

Isvolsky's attitude as to intervention in Northern Persia seems to be wavering a good deal. From a letter which Benckendorff read to me two days ago, he appears to be driven without a policy, and thinks that we also have none. We have just received your telegram relating the difficulties which he raised to our proposal of the quasi-recognition of Satar Khan. I hope he will agree, after mature reflection, to our suggestion, as it seems to me to be the only means of exerting pressure on the Shah. He has, however, now got a loophole of escape, owing to the Shah having withdrawn his rescript abolishing the Constitution. It is very desirable that armed intervention should be avoided, if possible, as there is a clique in the House of Commons who are very hostile to Russia, and will make it the opportunity for a combined attack on Anglo-Russian policy in Persia.

The Conference is not at all promising at present. Unfortunately Aerenthal holds the trump cards in his negotiations with Isvolsky, as he knows what a critical situation he is in. I am not quite certain how Austria would like it if, as a result of Aerenthal's obstinacy, the annexation remained unrecognized by Turkey or any of the Powers. I think this is a weapon which might be used more skilfully by Isvolsky.

This new development about the Jamsheedis is very tiresome, especially as the Ameer is so extremely difficult to handle. However, we shall have to face it somehow. The India Office have already telegraphed to India on the subject.

I think the Mohammerah-Julfa railway question may wait a little. We, and especially the Russians, have got so much on our hands at present, without unduly loading them further.

We will do our utmost to hurry up the Ahwaz telegraph question.

Secret. We have been informed officially by the United States Government that they are on the point of concluding an agreement with Japan, by which they guarantee the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Pacific, and the "open door" in China. It is much on the same lines as our alliance with Japan. The Germans will not like it at all, but I see no reason why the Russians should raise any objections, if they have, as we suppose, renounced any aggressive designs for the present in the Far East.

Y[ou]rs ever,
CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 465.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 41267/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, November 26, 1908

Tel. (No. 183.)

D. 3.45 p.m.

Your Tel[egram] No. 69 (of Nov[ember] 25).⁽¹⁾

We have no more interest than Germany has in bringing about a Conference for we have nothing to gain by it; but the general prospect of peace in the Balkans will be endangered if no settlement is come to.

The Turkish suggestion that Provinces should be made an independent State was not pressed. It is for Austria to find some means of reconciling Turkey to what has been done, for Austria knew that Turkey would object to the step she took: that is why she made it arbitrarily without consulting Turkey. Turkey can hardly be expected to waive protest unless Austria can find some means of reconciling Turkish opinion. If M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] recurs to the subject, you can speak in this sense.

Repeated to Vienna (No. 198), November 26, 1908.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 505-6, No. 460.]

No. 466.

Mr. Carnegie to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, November 26, 1908.

F.O. 41377/31738/08/44A.

D. 6.50 p.m.

Tel. (No. 92.)

R. 8.10 p.m.

My telegram No. 90 of 25th November.⁽¹⁾

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs sent for me to-day and gave me a Memorandum containing the views of his Government respecting the Turkish Conference proposals, asked for in your telegram No. 191 of 21st November [*sic*]⁽²⁾. Following is sense of Memorandum:—

(R.) "As is known to His Majesty's Government, confidential negotiations relative to the programme of Conference are proceeding between the Cabinets of Vienna and St. Petersburg.

In regard to the proposals which the Porte has communicated to the Great Powers, the Austro-Hungarian Government are ready to make them also the subject of an amicable exchange of views.

Just as the Turkish Government have formulated reserves relative to the advantages to be accorded to Servia and Montenegro, the Austro-Hungarian Government consider that the Conference destined to settle the different questions which have arisen in consequence of the recent events in the Balkan Peninsula, could not usefully meet until a previous agreement has been established among the Powers Signatory of Treaty of Berlin.

For this reason the Austro-Hungarian Government desire that their negotiations with the Porte, which are for the moment suspended, may be successfully and promptly concluded.

The Austrian Ambassador at Constantinople has been given instructions to the above effect, which bear witness to the good-will and best intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Government.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 506, No. 461.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 502-3, No. 456; this is a telegram to Sir F. Bertie which was repeated to Vienna as No. 191 of November 20.]

The above-mentioned negotiations cannot be continued until the Turkish Government change their attitude towards the question of the boycott, which is organized with the connivance of certain officials." (End of R.)

Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs said I was correct in my supposition that the Minister for Foreign Affairs desired that the Conference should take place, but added that he adhered to the views he had already expressed, namely, that the annexation of provinces was a *fait accompli*, and a matter of which act might be taken, but which could not be reopened for discussion.

MINUTES.

This is simply verbiage and does not advance matters. It is rather a strong order to expect Turkey and five Great Powers to meet in Conference and simply take act of an illegal proceeding without discussion and presumably without even expressing an opinion (as was done in 1871) upon the character of such proceedings. It is obvious that the illegal situation will be made legal by the Conference and an assurance in this sense should be sufficient without an effort being made to gag the Powers.

C. H.

I discussed this in this sense with Count Mensdorff yesterday.

E. G.
27.11.08.

No. 467.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, November 27, 1908.

F.O. 41463/31788/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 271.)

D. 2.25 p.m.

R. 3.25 p.m.

I asked M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and also Assistant M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] last night whether the revelations in some Hungarian papers as to Russia having had secret engagements with Austria in regard to annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Sandjak were true. They replied that the information was accurate. Not only before the Berlin Congress but subsequently both in 1881⁽¹⁾ and 1884 Russia had consented to Austria eventually annexing the above provinces. This, however, did not modify present attitude of Russian Gov[ernmen]t, viz, that Austria had modified an international instrument without previously consulting the other co-signatory Powers and that as in 1871 the matter must be submitted to the examination of the Powers. The Austrian ambassador here had explained that revelations had not emanated from Vienna Foreign Office but had been communicated to the Press by a former Private Secretary of Count Andrassy, who gave information from memory. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] was inclined to doubt this.

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is, I see, doubtful if it will be possible to induce Austria to go to a Conference on the conditions on which Russia can only take part in it, and I believe he is prepared to see the proposal for a Conference fall through. I do not think that he would much regret this in view of public opinion here. I am told but I will not guarantee my information, that the President of the Duma told the Prime Minister that if Russia recognized the annexation the Duma would refuse its assent to the loan which the Russian Gov[ernmen]t desired to make.

⁽¹⁾ [v. A. F. Pribram: *Secret Treaties* (Harvard Press, 1921), I, p. 43.]

No. 468.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 41617/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, December 1, 1908.

Tel. (No. 55.) Very Confidential.⁽¹⁾

D. 3:50 P.M.

Your desp[atch] No. 90⁽²⁾ and your tel[egram] No. 28.⁽²⁾

H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t could not give official countenance to any Convention specifically directed against any Power or Powers designated by name. We are very anxious to see the establishment of the closest and most friendly relations between the Balkan States and Turkey, as the surest means of promoting peace in the Near East and of preventing any further encroachments, but the Convention as now drafted would defeat that object since it is directed against Bulgaria as well as Austria. Any agreement concluded by Servia with Turkey and the other Balkan States should be of a purely defensive character.

I do not see how any agreement can secure the Balkan peninsula against aggression unless Bulgaria is on its side and a combination which forced Bulgaria into alliance with Austria would never secure peace or be strong.

You may assure the M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that I shall treat his comm[unicatio]n as strictly confidential.

(1) [Repeated to Sir A. Nicolson in telegram No. 637 of December 2. Telegram No. 638 to Sir A. Nicolson of December 2 instructed him to communicate the above confidentially to the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs.]

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 506-9, No. 462, and *note*.]

No. 469.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, December 1, 1908.

F.O. 42020/31738/08/44A.

D. 7:53 P.M.

Tel. (No. 279).

R. 9:45 P.M.

Turkey and Servia.

Minister for Foreign Affairs read to me a telegram he had received from Belgrade giving substance of a proposed Convention between the two above-mentioned countries, and in regard to which his opinion had been asked. He said that he could not approve any Convention which had for one of its objects possibility of any action in certain contingencies against Bulgaria. He has sent a copy of Belgrade telegram to Russian Ambassador in London, and also his views in case you mention matter to the latter. He asked me whether I had heard anything on the subject. I told him that I knew that certain *pourparlers* had taken place, and recently, but not from English sources, I had been told the substance of a draft Convention between Servia and Turkey, but that I had understood that latter was not very eager to conclude a Convention at this moment.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs seemed also to doubt as to whether Turkey would conclude a Convention with Servia alone. Russian idea, I gather, would be that all the Balkan States should form some kind of a defensive confederation with Turkey. He asked whether I knew if Austria had come to any special arrangement with Bulgaria. I replied in the negative, though Bulgarian Agent here had told me that Austria had from time to time sounded Bulgaria, but that latter did not desire to enter into any arrangement which might bring her into conflict with other Slav States in the Balkans

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 42535 31738 08 44A.

(No. 556.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. December 1, 1908.

R. December 7, 1908.

Monsieur Isvolsky enquired of me this morning whether I knew anything of the negotiations passing between Serbia and Turkey for the conclusion of a Convention. I told him that I was aware that some "pourparlers" had taken place, but I was not very clear as to the present position of the question. I had heard, during the last day or two, but not from an English source, in fact I could tell him confidentially that the French Ambassador had mentioned the matter to me, that there was a Draft Convention consisting of eight Articles under weigh. I had not been made acquainted with all the eight Articles, but I recollected that there were two Articles dealing with the respective obligations of Serbia and of Turkey in case of hostilities. In the first place Serbia engaged not to declare war with Austria without previously obtaining the consent of Turkey; and in the second place the latter undertook to assist Serbia in the event of Austria-Hungary attacking her. There was further some allusion to the attitude to be assumed towards Bulgaria in the event of that Power causing difficulties. I did not, however, understand that this Draft Convention was in any final form, but I had gathered that it was still the subject of deliberation.

Monsieur Isvolsky then read to me a telegram from the Russian Minister at Belgrade which reported the more important heads of a Draft Convention which had been communicated to him by M. Milovanovitch; and which, it was said, had also been communicated to Mr. Whitehead.⁽¹⁾ It is unnecessary, therefore, to repeat it from memory in this despatch, especially as Monsieur Isvolsky informed me that he had repeated the Belgrade telegram to Count Benckendorff, accompanied by his views, in the event of your speaking to His Excellency on the subject. Monsieur Isvolsky said that the Servian Government had solicited his opinion on the Draft Convention and that he would reply or had replied that Serbia as an independent country might conclude any Convention she desired, but that she must not expect that Russia would favour any project directed against Bulgaria; and, so far as I can recollect, he had also added that she must not rely on Russian support in any bellicose enterprise which she might undertake.

Monsieur Isvolsky asked if I thought that Turkey would be likely to conclude a Convention with Serbia alone; and I replied that, personally, I should doubt if she would do so at this moment; and it seemed to me that any Convention of the nature of that described to me would be almost entirely to the sole advantage of Serbia. Turkish aid would be invaluable to Serbia, but it was a question whether Serbia could render much useful assistance to Turkey. But the question seemed to be still under discussion and we had heard only the version from Belgrade. Monsieur Isvolsky asked if I knew whether any special arrangements existed between Bulgaria and Austria-Hungary. I replied in the negative; and I said that quite recently Monsieur Zokof had told me that although Bulgaria had been from time to time sounded by Austria, she had declined to entertain any arrangement which might lead her into conflict with her Slav neighbours. I had understood from Monsieur Zokof that Bulgaria had in view an eventual confederation of all the Balkan States with Turkey; and this was a project which I believed was favourably viewed in Russia. Monsieur Isvolsky did not deny this and added that Russia was desirous of not being drawn into war if she could avoid it.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 506-9, No. 462.]

No. 471.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 42103/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, December 2, 1908.

Tel. (No. 284.)

D. 12.30 P.M.

Servian Gov[ernmen]t have made representations to the effect that the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t continue to mass troops and to make such military preparations along the northern frontier that they are forced to the conclusion that Austria intends to invade Servia. The Servian Gov[ernmen]t therefore ask that immediate steps may be taken to urge upon the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t the cessation of these measures and the restoration of the normal military situation on the frontier as has been already effected on the part of Servia.

Ascertain if similar representations have been made to the Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited and their views as to the answer that should be sent.

Repeated to Berlin (No. 189), Rome (No. 202), St. Petersburg (No. 685), Vienna (No. 204), Belgrade (No. 56). December 2, 1908.

No. 472.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, December 2, 1908.

F.O. 42134/31738/08/44A.

D. 5.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 29.) Very Confidential.

R. 9.45 P.M.

I communicated to Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning substance of your telegram No. 55 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

His Excellency expressed complete agreement with your views, especially penultimate paragraph. He has sent Secretary-General to Constantinople to confer with Special Envoy, who is in the first instance to submit Servian amendments described in my telegram No. 28⁽²⁾. This his Excellency thought necessary in order to show deference to wishes of Grand Vizier. If the Turkish Government reject them, Special Envoy is to propose a purely defensive alliance, as follows:—

“Turkey guarantees independence and integrity of Servia; Servia guarantees the integrity and independence of Turkish possessions in Europe. The Contracting Parties accordingly engage mutually to render assistance to one another with all their available forces should one of them be attacked by any other Power or Powers.”

If Turkey rejects this also, as Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks probable, Special Envoy is to propose a similar declaration of community of interests with a general promise of mutual support, as follows:—

“Convinced that independence and territorial integrity of each of the Contracting Parties constitutes an object of supreme importance to the other, Servia and Turkey declare that in case one of them should be threatened by foreign aggression, and upon a simple announcement of the fact by the menaced State, all necessary measures will be taken to concert on the common defence, or, if that should prove impossible, upon other ways and means by which they will afford one another aid and succour.”

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 514, No. 468.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 509, No. 462, *note*.]

No. 473.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 42433/31738/08/44.

Foreign Office, December 3, 1908.

Tel. (No. 472.)

D. 7.30 P.M.

I am impressed by importance to Turkey and Bulgaria of an agreement being reached between them. I have therefore urged it strongly on Bulgarian Chargé d'Affaires pointing out that action of Turkish Gov[ernment] in consenting to negotiate on financial basis only without political conditions limiting Bulgarian independence was evidence of moderation and disposition to settle. To this I thought Bulgaria should respond by being liberal in financial arrangements. Difficulty of conceding principle that anything was due for Bulgarian tribute might be got over by offer of a lump sum in payment of all claims, without stating these in detail.

I have told Turkish Ambassador of this pointing out that Turkey's position would be strengthened by agreement with Bulgaria and that it will not do for Turkey to remain on bad terms indefinitely with both Bulgaria and Austria.

I have made it clear that what I said must not be taken as official intervention, but as informal and friendly counsel. Fuller report of conversation will follow by bag.

Repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 640), Sofia (No. 130), December 3, 1908.

No. 474.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 42236/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, December 4, 1908.

Tel. (No. 287.)

My circular tel[egram] of Dec[ember] 2.⁽¹⁾

In view of opinions of other Governments H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will tell Servian Min[ister] that they do not consider that there are sufficient grounds for making representations at Vienna.

I had already told Servian Chargé d'Affaires that Austrian Ambassador had informed me that measures taken by Austria were only precautionary and did not amount to mobilization.

MINUTE.

Reply should be given verbally to Servian Ch[argé] d'Affaires.

[E. G.]

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 516, No. 471.]

No. 475.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 43902/31738/08/44A.

(No. 499.) Confidential.

Paris, D. December 5, 1908.

Sir,

R. December 16, 1908.⁽¹⁾

His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna dined here on the 3rd instant in order to make the acquaintance of Monsieur Clemenceau and Monsieur Pichon. At my request Sir Fairfax Cartwright has furnished me with the inclosed Memorandum of the conversation which he had with those gentlemen in regard to the situation in the Near East.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

⁽¹⁾ [Sic. The actual date of receipt appears to have been December 6.]

Enclosure in No. 475.

Memorandum by Sir F. Cartwright.

(Confidential.)

Paris, December 4, 1908.

I met Monsieur Clemenceau and Monsieur Pichon at dinner at the British Embassy and I had the opportunity of having a conversation with them of considerable length.

I found that Monsieur Clemenceau considered the present situation as very serious and as growing every hour more serious. It seemed to him as if Austria were paralysed and unable to suggest anything practical or to take a step forward which would help to get her out of the difficulties she had created for herself. Unless something were done promptly Austria would drift into further complications and finally into open hostilities with more than one Power. Monsieur Clemenceau said to me that the more he pondered over the present problem the more did it seem to him that all indications pointed to a threatening war.

I asked him if he had any way to suggest by which Austria might get out of her present position.

He replied that he agreed with me that the first thing for me to work for on my reaching Vienna was to try and persuade Baron von Aehrenthal to settle with Turkey on a financial basis. He thought Austria had not absolutely shut the door on such an idea. This was the only practical way of coming to terms with Turkey.

I asked Monsieur Clemenceau what was the attitude of Germany with regard to Austria.

He replied that Germany was at heart very much annoyed with her ally and that she desired France, whose present relations with Austria were excellent, to use her influence at Vienna to induce Baron von Aehrenthal to act at the present juncture in a conciliatory spirit.

Would Germany remain faithful to Austria under all circumstances? I inquired.

Monsieur Clemenceau said to me that he had received hints that Germany might have to abandon Austria under certain eventualities. The Kaiser had a physical dread of war and he thought he would hesitate if he saw himself face to face with a possible war with Russia, France and England. Perhaps the hints of possible German perfidy were intended to be communicated to Austria to act as a restraining influence upon her.

Monsieur Clemenceau told me that the idea which had so long prevailed in Berlin that France would never fight was giving way to a better realisation of the true state of things. France though intensely pacific would not allow her susceptibilities to be trampled upon by Germany: if necessary she would stand up and risk a fight and she was better prepared for a struggle than in 1870.

To return to Austria's relations with Turkey I said to Monsieur Clemenceau that it would be well if Austria could be induced to send a Secret Agent to sound the Young Turk Committee at Constantinople as to the terms on which they would recognise the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and put an end to the boycott. The Austrian Ambassador could not be expected to do this work.

Monsieur Clemenceau approved, as well as of the proposal I made that I might suggest to Baron von Aehrenthal the sending of an Archduke to St. Petersburg with friendly messages to the Czar.

In Monsieur Clemenceau's opinion any show at the present moment of a conciliatory disposition of Austria towards Russia would be welcome.

I told Monsieur Clemenceau that the information which had reached me from Italy showed that the anti-Austrian feeling which was running there was very strong but that Count von Khevenhüller had made somewhat light of it when talking to me a few days ago.

He replied that Monsieur Barrère entirely confirmed the information I had

received and he had reported that since he had been in Rome he had never known so strong a popular current running against Austria.

In conclusion Monsieur Clemenceau advised me to do my utmost to make Baron von Aehrenthal understand how seriously the situation was viewed by foreign Governments and if I had the occasion of being alone with the Emperor to impress upon His Majesty the dangers which lay ahead of Austria.

MINUTE.

M. Clemenceau's diagnosis of Baron Aehrenthal's condition appears to be true. He seems paralysed and unable to suggest any step to extricate himself from his present *impasse*. In the meantime the situation daily grows more serious owing to the military preparations which Austria appears to be openly making, and to the growing opposition in Russia to a Conference which shall legalise the situation. And yet if no Conference takes place it is quite certain that an illegal situation cannot be indefinitely prolonged without war, for Serbia and Montenegro would certainly provoke it at the most convenient moment to themselves. It was only yesterday (Saturday) that I told Count Mensdorff that Sir G. Lowther had reported by tel[egram](²) that the Austrian Ambassador at Const[antino]ple was convinced that Kiamil Pasha had done his utmost to stop the Austrian boycott but that he had, in face of public opinion, failed to achieve this result. I expressed my strong personal opinion that B[aro]n Aehrenthal would do wisely to accept this demonstration of goodwill on the part of the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t and to lose no time in making proposals to them which Turkey might be in a position to accept. This would certainly produce a *détente* and would be more likely to put an end to the Austrian boycott than anything else. What the Austrian proposals would be I could not imagine but, I repeated, whatever the Austrian press might say, H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t would welcome negotiations between Austria and Turkey and would wish them every success. I also pointed out to him the inherent dangers of an indefinitely prolonged and illegal situation, and insisted on the necessity of a Conference to regularise the annexation which it is very unlikely that any Power will try to upset. As I know that C[oun]t Mensdorff is very much afraid of B[aro]n Aehrenthal I doubt if he would have the courage to express such views, nor do I think that his influence is sufficient to make them carry weight.

M. Clemenceau is right in thinking that a settlement between Austria and Turkey could only be secured on a financial basis. Economic advantages such as a modification of the capitulations, another surtax or a Commercial Treaty, abolition of the foreign Post Offices etc. are advantages which are not dependent on Austria alone, and which the new régime in Turkey consider themselves already entitled to demand of the Powers. None of these are likely to satisfy Turkey, and, if Austria intends to propose them, the sooner she realises that they are unacceptable the more likely she will be to find some other solution before the critical moment of the spring arrives. Baron Aehrenthal has certainly let us know in a very decided manner that Austria will have nothing to say to taking over any portion of the Turkish debt, and it seems therefore very doubtful whether Austria would at present be willing to compromise on a financial basis. B[aro]n Aehrenthal would therefore have to modify his present attitude, or the Emperor would have to change his Foreign Minister, if a settlement on these lines is to be obtained.

It is difficult to believe in the possible infidelity of Germany towards Austria. The information in our possession is in the opposite sense, and that Germany will repay to Austria the support given by the latter at Algéciras. It is probably true that the German Emperor has a physical repugnance to war, and that Germany would help to keep the ring in the event of war between Austria on the one hand and Serbia and Montenegro on the other. But, in the almost certain event of the complete annihilation of Serbia and Montenegro in such a war, and of the probable intervention of Russia in favour of Serbia, and of Italy in favour of Montenegro, it is difficult to see how it would be possible for Germany to stand on one side. That Germany does not want war at present can hardly be doubted, but it is Germany who is in the best position to use a conciliatory influence upon Austria and we have no indication of her having attempted so far to do so.

The proposals suggested by Sir F. Cartwright, that Austria should send a secret Agent to Const[antino]ple and an Archduke to St. Petersburg are simply palliatives which would be of no real use unless accompanied by a change in the present irreconcilable attitude of B[aro]n Aehrenthal.

C. H. Dec[ember] 6, 1908.
E. G.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 504, No. 458.]

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

December 6, 1908.

Many thanks for your's of the 2nd received this morning. As I am going away tomorrow for three days I am answering it at once.

I met Benckendorff last night and he asked me our views about the Turco-Servian Treaty. I told him that they were identical with those of his Gov[ernment] and that we had informed the Servian Gov[ernment] of our opinion long before we had heard the views of the Russian Gov[ernment]. He asked me what we thought about the inclusion of Bulgaria and I told him that we had told the Servian Gov[ernment] that no Treaty could be of any use in which Bulgaria was not included. He seemed very pleased and remarked on the identity of the views of the two Gov[ernments] in regard to Near Eastern affairs.

We are doing all we can to get Turkey and Bulgaria to come to terms. If we could achieve this it would be an element of stability in a situation which is daily growing more serious. The irreconcilable attitude of Aehrenthal and the military preparations which Austria seems to be making quite openly are very ominous, while the growing indifference of Russian public opinion towards a Conference whose business it will be to legalise, what is to them, an undesirable situation makes me feel anxious as to developments in the near future. And yet if no Conference takes place it is quite certain that an illegal situation cannot be indefinitely prolonged without war, for it seems pretty certain that Serbia and Montenegro would probably provoke it at the moment which seemed most propitious. In the almost certain annihilation of Serbia and Montenegro in such a war it is difficult to see how Russia and Italy could be prevented from intervening, and that would probably be the signal for war to become general. Truly an awful prospect.

I agree with you that the Russian position towards the annexation is weak owing to previous arrangements with Austria and also to Isvolsky's attitude at Beuchlau [*sic*]. I have however always maintained to Mensdorff that a little conciliation on both sides is all that is necessary, that the so-called discussion at a Conference need only be of a most formal character where what is to be said might be decided in advance and where all provocation would be avoided. We always insist that there is no question of upsetting the annexation but that it is too much to expect Turkey and five Great Powers to go to a Conference gagged. Unfortunately Mensdorff is in such a funk of Aehrenthal and for his own position that I doubt if he reports much of our views and he certainly enjoys no influence at Vienna except of a social order.

The question of primary importance is that of an agreement between Austria and Turkey, and I do not see what other solution of this question there can be except on a financial basis. Aehrenthal may talk of economic advantages such as a modification of the capitulations, another surtax or a commercial Treaty, the abolition of the foreign Post offices &c., but none of these are advantages which can be conceded by Austria alone since they are dependent on the will of the other Powers, and moreover the new régime regard themselves as already entitled to demand these concessions of the Powers. Aehrenthal has already told us that he will not consent to taking over any part of the Turkish Debt which looks as though he will not compromise on a financial basis at all. If therefore a settlement is to be obtained on these lines which I really believe to be the only possible solution Aehrenthal will either have to modify his attitude or the Emperor will have to change his Foreign Minister. The latter alternative seems more probable than the former.

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

I fear that Persia will yet give us a lot of trouble, and the advent of the revolutionaries at Tabreez is unfortunate. In any case we intend to maintain an observant attitude and if any suggestions are to be made for dealing with the situation we will leave it to the Russians to make them.

I wonder if the Russian news of the persecution of the Jamsheedis in Afghanistan is correct. So far we have had no confirmation.

It is a pity that Palitzin is to leave the General Staff. I hope his successor will be as friendly.

No time for more.

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

No. 477.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 43024/31738/08/44.

(No. 399.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 7, 1908.

Count Benckendorff spoke to me to-day about the proposed Servian Treaty with Turkey, concerning which M. Iswolsky and I had already expressed similar views.

I told Count Benckendorff that I had expressed the opinion at Belgrade that any alliance which left Bulgaria outside, or which threw Bulgaria on to the side of Austria, would be absolutely useless, even for purposes of defence.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 478.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 43026/31738/08/44.

(No. 400.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 7, 1908.

Count Benckendorff told me to-day that M. Iswolsky, in giving the assurance to Turkey that compensation for Serbia and Montenegro would not be provided at her expense, proposed to add that the Conference was to have the right to discuss with complete freedom all the questions submitted to it.

I told Count Benckendorff that I entirely agreed with this: it was in accordance with the view we had always expressed.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 479.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 43025/31738/08/44.

(No. 401.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 7, 1908.

Count Benckendorff spoke to me to-day about the Servian request for a representation at Vienna with regard to the movements of Austrian troops. M. Iswolsky had replied that this was a serious step, which could not be decided upon in a moment.

I told him I had replied to the Servian Chargé d'Affaires by giving him the explanations which Count Mensdorff had made to me a few days before. I had not promised to make a representation.

Count Benckendorff then gave me the following note (see enclosure of the information which the Russian Government had received respecting the movements of Austrian troops. He asked me whether I could confirm it.

I replied that I had heard something about these movements, but not in so much detail. I had heard that 8,000 men were being sent to Cattaro. I admitted that the situation was uncomfortable, but I did not think that Austria would cross over into Servia or Montenegro unless she was first attacked by those countries.

[I am, &c.]

F. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 479.

Note communicated by Count Benckendorff respecting Movements of Austrian Troops.

(Strictly Confidential.)

The following measures are said to have been taken for the mobilisation of the 7th, 13th, and 15th Austro-Hungarian army corps:—

1. 25 companies in war strength have been brought from different parts of the Empire.
2. The soldiers whose terms were expiring in December, have been detained under the colours.
3. "Supernumerary reservists" of two terms have been retained in ranks.
4. Two terms of reservists have been called to the colours.

On the whole, the strength of this [*sic*] 3 corps has been reinforced by 60,000 men, as compared to the peace establishments; they have been hurriedly provided with new quick-firing and machine guns.

Along the River Drina is an uninterrupted cordon of Austrian troops: along the Save and the Danube are placed observation posts with strong reserves.

At Trieste is begun an embarkation of 50,000 men arrived from the north and whose destination is Ragusa: artillery arrives from Bohemia and is being embarked.

No. 480.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Carnegie.

F.O. 43029/31738/08/44.
(No. 148.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 7, 1908.

I told Count Mensdorff to-day the Servians had represented to me that they were very much alarmed by the movements of Austrian troops, and they had asked us to join in a representation at Vienna on the subject.

In reply, I had given the Servians the explanations which Count Mensdorff had made to me a few days before, to the effect that the Austrians were only increasing their peace footing, as the men had been over-taxed by recent events, and that the Austrians were not doing anything which amounted to a mobilisation. I had not promised to make any representations on the subject.

It seemed to me, however, from all I heard, that the movements of Austrian troops went beyond what Count Mensdorff had indicated.

He replied that he thought these movements had been exaggerated in the reports which had appeared; but, in any case, they were purely defensive measures. It was absolutely necessary to guard the frontier against the possible incursion of bands.

Count Mensdorff then urged that, if it were only known at Constantinople that we were favourable to a settlement, this would have a beneficial effect.

I said that of course we were favourable to a settlement, and the Turks knew this quite well. But what more could I say to the Turks, except pure generalities, until Austria made them an offer? I did not know what they would accept; but if Austria were to offer to take over a part of the Turkish Debt, that would at least be something substantial.

Count Mensdorff spoke of the harm which was being done by the Press and by a number of English people who were in Belgrade. The Servians, he heard, were purchasing large munitions of war, and seemed to have plenty of money. In Montenegro, though it was admitted that the British Government had given a warning that nothing beyond diplomatic support was to be expected, articles in the "Daily Telegraph" and other newspapers were being pointed to as showing that British sympathy would go beyond this and it was urged that the "Daily Telegraph" was in touch with the British Government. Count Mensdorff said he knew this was not the case, but all these things together were doing a great deal of harm, and he was afraid some of the mischief would remain in the feelings of Austria.

I told him we were no more responsible for the leading articles in the "Daily Telegraph" than we were for the appearance of the German Emperor's interview in it. This paper was not connected with the Government in any way. Mr. Noel Buxton, who had been said to be giving gold to the Servians, was not an emissary of the Government: it was nonsense to suppose that he had distributed any money, or that the Servians had got any from us.

I realised the unpleasant feeling which was being created in the country: but if Austria could find some means of coming to a settlement with Turkey, Servia, and Montenegro, people here would be quick to recognise a settlement. Meanwhile, the Austrian Press wrote as if we, and not Austria, had disturbed the *status quo*.

Count Mensdorff deplored the tone of the "Neue [*sic*] Freie Presse." He observed, however, that he was afraid it would be impossible to satisfy Servia and Montenegro. Whatever was done, they would never express themselves content.

I said that of course it was very much easier to disturb the *status quo* than to re-establish equilibrium.

[I am. &c.]
F. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 481.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 43406 31738/08/44.

(No. 334.)

Sir.

Foreign Office, December 8, 1908.

Count Metternich, after introducing to me to-day the new Councillor of his Embassy, made some observations upon the Near Eastern question, in the course of which he said he thought the Turks were wrong in the question of the boycott.

I observed that the boycott was the weapon always used by the weaker nations. It had, for example, been used by China in two instances lately. The Turkish Ambassador had assured me that no officials took part in the boycott or were responsible for it.

Count Metternich said that no one could deny the right of people to refuse to buy, but Turkey was bound by Treaty to permit the disembarkation of goods, and the porters were a guild more or less connected with the Turkish Government.

I replied that a guild seemed to me more like a trade union, and I could not believe that under any Treaty rights the Turkish Government were bound to supply porters.

Count Metternich went on to say that the Committee of the Young Turks, who were more powerful than the Government, were instigating the boycott.

I observed that the Committee were not the Government. They rather represented public opinion: which was beyond doubt often stronger than Governments, and which could not be controlled. The fact of the matter was that Baron d'Aerenthal had forgotten the forces which were beneath the surface, and by breaking the surface he had brought all these forces into motion. He had brought to the surface the feeling in Turkey, the feeling in Servia and Montenegro, the Slav feeling in Russia, and the feeling which had been disclosed in Italy by the last debate at Rome. I did not accuse Baron d'Aerenthal of having done all this designedly; on the contrary, I thought the present situation was due to lack of forethought.

Count Metternich said that what had been more surprising still was the hostile feeling to the Austrian action expressed in other quarters which were not so directly concerned.

I told him that, if it was to comments in this country to which he referred, the line we had taken officially was simply that Treaties were not to be broken without the consent of those who were parties to them. This view had been stated quite as definitely by M. Tissoni the other day.

I gathered, however, that it was not to this, but to articles in the British Press to which Count Metternich referred. I then told him that if I were to allow myself to be irritated by what the foreign Press said about us the foreign policy which came from this room would be very different to what it was. I could imagine nothing more irritating and provocative than the way in which the Austrian Press was writing at the present time: the Austrian Press wrote as if we, and not Baron d'Aerenthal, had annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, and disturbed the *status quo*, and made all the trouble, whereas all along we had, as a matter of fact, been working for a settlement.

Count Metternich told me it was reported that our influence at Constantinople was so strong that whatever we said would be listened to.

I answered that I had impressed upon the Turks that it was to their interest to wind up all these troubles on their frontiers in return for reasonable compensation. But I could not ask them to condone all that had been done if they were to receive nothing in return. Turkish opinion would not allow the Turkish Government to adopt such a course as this; and if we were to suggest it we should at once lose all our influence, whatever it might be, at Constantinople. Why did not Baron d'Aerenthal offer some inducement to Turkey?

Count Metternich said he did not think enough attention had been paid to the compensation offered by the withdrawal from the Sanjak. He wished that Austria would offer something more, but as Baron d'Aerenthal refused to do so it was not practicable expecting it.

I said I thought he might have offered to take over a part of the Turkish Debt. Turkey had lost territory, but was always left with the whole of her Debt.

Count Metternich observed that it seemed the Turks took a very sentimental view of what they had lost, but were willing to give up their sentiment in return for money.

I replied that this was precisely what I did not know that the Turks were willing to do, and it might prove a serious difficulty. My own opinion was that the Turks would be wise, in view of all their internal difficulties, to give up these frontier questions in return for such compensation as would strengthen them at home. But I was not at all sure that Turkish public opinion would allow a settlement on this basis, and this uncertainty was one of the great difficulties of the situation.

I said that I had only had time to read Prince Bülow's speech very hurriedly as yet that morning, but it seemed to me very friendly in tone, and calculated not to add to the difficulties of the situation.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 482.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 43516/31738/08/44A.

(No. 96.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. December 10, 1908.

R. December 14, 1908.

In my telegram No. 28 of the 28th Ultimo,⁽¹⁾ I had the honour to record the interview I had with M. Milovanovitch on the previous day, in which he described the counter proposals he thought of making to the latest Turkish draft of the Military Convention, and asked me to ascertain whether His Majesty's Government would have any objection to the conclusion of a Convention between Turkey and Serbia in that form.

In further discussing the situation on that occasion, M. Milovanovitch became somewhat pessimistic, and said that if this Convention came to nothing and if in the end Serbia found that she had been abandoned by Russia and the other Great Powers, and was left helpless and without support, with Bulgaria hostile to her on one side and Austria on the other, a due regard for her own dignity would compel her to prefer yielding to the Great Power rather than to the small one, and she might even think it best to merge herself in the former, among the populations of which so large a number of her own race were already included.

On the 2nd Instant I called by appointment to give M. Milovanovitch your reply to his question, as conveyed to me in your telegram No. 55⁽²⁾ of December 1, and I left with him an *aide-mémoire* in French, copy of which I have the honour to enclose. His Excellency expressed complete concurrence with your views, and repeated a remark he had made on a former occasion, to the effect that he had only adhered to the form of the proposals made by the Turkish Government and suggested a counterpoise to their Article concerning Bulgaria, in order not to run the risk of bringing the negotiations to an end by rejecting what they seemed to have so much at heart. He most particularly concurred with the paragraph in your telegram which states that unless Bulgaria joins the proposed alliance it will be too weak to insure peace.

He had anticipated your answer by sending M. Spalaikovitch to Constantinople with the two further suggestions for a purely defensive understanding, the text of which I had the honour to report in my telegram No. 29 of December 2,⁽³⁾ but for the reasons stated above he had felt bound to submit the amendment to the Turkish proposals in the first instance.

I saw M. Milovanovitch again on the 7th Instant, and His Excellency then told me that he had received a further telegram from M. Novakovitch stating that with some small modifications, the nature of which he did not explain, the amended draft (as communicated to me by M. Milovanovitch on the 27th November) would probably be accepted, but that as the present Turkish Government considered themselves to be merely a Provisional one, they would leave the actual signature of the Convention to their Successors, who would come into office after the Turkish Parliament had met.

Meanwhile, however, he expected that the Declaration which constituted the last Servian proposal, and which he had communicated to me on the 2nd Instant, would be signed without delay, and he promised to let me know as soon as this had actually been done.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 509, No. 462, *note*.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 514, No. 468.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 516, No. 472.]

Enclosure in No. 482.

Aide-Mémoire communicated by Mr. Whitehead to M. Milovanović.

Le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique ne saurait donner son appui officiel à une convention dirigée d'une façon spécifique contre une Puissance ou plusieurs Puissances désignées nominativement. Il désire vivement de voir s'établir entre les Etats Balcaniques et la Turquie des relations les plus intimes et amicales, vu que ceci serait le moyen le plus sûr de maintenir la paix en Orient et d'empêcher les empiètements éventuels; mais la Convention comme elle est actuellement projetée n'atteindrait pas ce but, puisqu'elle est dirigée contre la Bulgarie autant que contre l'Autriche.

Tout accord conclu par la Serbie avec la Turquie et d'autres Etats Balcaniques devrait avoir un caractère purement défensif.

Sir Edward Grey ne voit pas comment un accord quelconque pourrait assurer la Péninsule Balcanique contre les agressions si la Bulgarie en était exclue, et une combinaison qui forcerait la Bulgarie à se ranger du côté de l'Autriche ne serait jamais assez forte pour assurer la paix.

Sir Edward Grey donne l'assurance au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de Serbie, que sa communication sera considérée comme strictement confidentielle.

No. 483.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, December 11, 1908.

F.O. 49269/31738/08/44A.

D. 11:50 A.M.

Tel. (No. 99.) Very Confidential.

R. 3:50 P.M.

I saw Baron d'Aehrenthal late yesterday afternoon. His views⁽¹⁾ were that Austria had grievances against other Powers and he gave me to understand it was England's attitude to Austria that was at the bottom of the present troubles. I told him I did not wish to enter into recriminations with regard to Austria's action respecting Bosnia but only wished to sound him as to whether there was a possible practical way of terminating the differences between Austria and Turkey. I said to him that precious time was being lost because Austria made no substantial offer to Turkey and I added that moment had come when the Emperor without loss of prestige could act generously towards the Porte. He asked me what I proposed Austria should do. I suggested the offer of a pecuniary indemnity to Turkey. After some hesitation he did not reject the (group omitted ? suggestion) but he added that in that case he would have to put before Turkey the bill of expenses incurred by Austria on Bosnia. I remarked that then the offer would be valueless. He then asked me if I had any other suggestion to make. I enquired whether idea of Austria taking part in a guaranteed Turkish loan would be rejected by him. After some reflexion he said to me that that was an idea which was feasible and that if the proposal were made he would (?) receive it sympathetically. I then asked if he would like a special Turkish envoy to be sent to Vienna to accelerate progress of negotiations. He said no but he should like Reshid Pasha, the newly appointed Ambassador, to come here without delay fully instructed.

He declared his wish to be most conciliatory to Turkey in spite of the boycott and added that Austria and England had the same interest in strengthening the new Turkish Régime.

(¹) [For his views as expressed to Prince Bülow of December 8, 1908, v. G.P. XXVI, 1, pp. 312-5. cp. also document immediately below.]

As regards the conference he expressed himself as desirous that it should meet, but the general drift of his conversation was that before doing so he must be assured that no inconvenient discussion with regard to Austria's recent action would be raised. I imagine that he would like a rehearsal of the discussion on main issues before conference met.

With regard to Serbia I found him very stubborn. According to him Austria could not tolerate much longer Serbian provocation. There was a limit to Austria's patience. If war came Austria was not to blame but those Powers who had encouraged Serbia's pretensions. Here he got excited and accused England of causing half the Servian troubles through the action of her press. He recognised the correct attitude of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in regard to Serbia, but he implored me to impress on you the serious consequences which might arise both to England and Austria and to peace of Europe if efforts were not made by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to restrain certain sections of the British press from attacking Austria. As regards Austrian forces accumulated on the Servian frontier he declared Austria would never tolerate any demand from foreign Powers to diminish them. I replied that as far as I knew H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had no intention of taking part in any such action but I observed that it seemed to me that the greater the number of troops on the frontier the more likely it was that an incident would occur. He said that that was quite possible but that if it occurred it would be from the Servian and not from the Austrian side; and he talked as if war with Serbia was quite possible. I asked him whether in that case Russia would not be compelled to intervene. He replied that he knew Russia like his pocket and felt sure that she was not in a position to go to war.

I enquired whether there was any possibility of Austria offering Serbia any economic concessions. His replies were rather vague but I gathered that in principle he would not object to construction of a railway from Serbia to some Dalmatian port.

The conversation lasted a long time and the impression I gained was that he was very anxious to strengthen his position by coming to terms with Turkey.

No. 484.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 43468/31738/08/44A.

(No. 213.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. December 11, 1908.

R. December 14, 1908.

I have the honour to report to you that I arrived in Vienna yesterday morning and that late in the afternoon I was received by Baron von Aehrenthal, and although my conversation with His Excellency was not of an official character, as I have not as yet presented my Credentials, yet it was of sufficient interest to warrant my reporting it to you.⁽¹⁾

The conversation began by Baron von Aehrenthal explaining to me the present position of Austria with regard to Turkey. According to him the Austrian Government were most desirous of seeing the present negotiations brought to a satisfactory conclusion, but he said that one of the difficulties which lay in the way of achieving this was the governmental anarchy which at present existed in Constantinople. None of the high officials there seemed to be in a position to carry out any promises they might make. The Young Turk Committee, an irresponsible Body, appeared to be the master of the situation, and yet it had no official representative at its head to whom the Foreign Powers could make any satisfactory representations. He asserted that Austrian interests were identical with those of Great Britain in Turkey; both wanted

⁽¹⁾ [cp. immediately preceding document. For Baron von Aehrenthal's account of this conversation, v. G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 340-2.]

to see a strong and regenerated Ottoman Empire; both wanted security for freedom of trade within the Ottoman dominions, and no better guarantee for this could be obtained than by fostering the establishment of an improved Turkish Administration. He knew Turkey was passing through a dangerous crisis at this moment when her Parliament was about to meet and his desire was to do nothing just now which would increase the difficulties of the Turkish Government. For this reason he asserted to me that he would keep the boycotting question separate from that of the negotiations with regard to Bosnia and Herzegovina. The latter was a political dispute between Austria and Turkey which must be settled in some way or another. The boycotting question, on the other hand, was now regarded by the Austrian Government as an infraction of her Treaty rights which guaranteed her freedom of trade without special impediments within the Ottoman dominions. With regard to the infraction of these Austrian rights, His Excellency said that it was in great part due to the laxity of the Turkish authorities, and for this he reserved to himself the right of claiming damages.

I inquired of Baron von Aehrenthal whether the negotiations with Turkey were making any real progress. He replied that Marquis Pallavicini had the full instructions of his Government and if delay occurred he seemed to lay the blame upon the slow methods of the Turks. I pointed out to His Excellency that perhaps the delay was caused by the apparent reluctance of the Austrian Government to make any practical offer of compensation to the Porte for the loss of the Sultan's suzerain rights over Bosnia and Herzegovina. He asked me what I meant by a practical offer to Turkey on the part of Austria. I said to him that all the Great Powers were most desirous of seeing the strained relations which at present existed between Austria and Turkey brought to a rapid end, and that it seemed to me that Austria would gain in prestige if she now assumed the magnanimous rôle and made a generous pecuniary offer to Turkey as compensation for the loss of her sovereign rights over the two Provinces.

After some hesitation Baron von Aehrenthal gave me to understand that he was so desirous of settling the present difficulty with Turkey that he would not absolutely oppose a pecuniary indemnity being offered to the Porte, but he qualified this statement by adding that in that case Austria would be compelled to present to the Sultan a long bill of expenses incurred in the pacification of Bosnia and Herzegovina and of the feeding of Bosnian refugees in the early days of the occupation. I remarked that in that case a pecuniary offer made to Turkey would be of little practical value to her. He said to me: "Have you any other suggestion to make?" I asked him whether the idea of a guaranteed Loan to Turkey to help to put the new Turkish Administration upon their legs would be acceptable to the Austrian Government. In reply he repeated to me that they were most desirous of helping the new régime in Turkey, and that therefore the idea that Austria should take part in a guaranteed Loan was one which he could entertain, and he added that he would even entertain it sympathetically if made. He said something similar had been done with regard to Egypt. If Turkey could be satisfied by such a Loan he thought it might be a solution, but he could say nothing definite and official about it at present. I inquired of His Excellency whether he thought that the sending of a special Turkish Ambassador to Vienna would accelerate the conclusion of the negotiations between Austria and Turkey. His Excellency thought it would be better not to send such a special Ambassador here but he would be glad, he said, if Reshid Pasha, the newly-appointed Turkish Ambassador in Vienna, should arrive at his post without delay and come with the full instructions of his Government.

I may add that in the course of the conversation Baron von Aehrenthal made a remark that already in the month of June Monsieur Iswolsky had mentioned to him the possibility of Austria having to annex Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the general tone of his conversation to me was that Monsieur Iswolsky was perfectly well aware that events might arise which would compel Austria to act with rapidity as regards the annexation of the two Provinces.

Turning to the question of the Conference, Baron von Aehrenthal expressed himself as entirely in agreement with His Majesty's Government, that it was most desirable that it should meet without delay, and he took the line that the fault did not really lie with Austria if the Conference did not meet, for what the Austrian Government asked for seemed most reasonable, viz., that a sort of dress-rehearsal of what should appear on the protocols of the Conference with regard to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina should take place between the Great Powers before the Conference met and should be definitely adhered to at its sittings.

When speaking of Austria's position towards Great Britain, Baron von Aehrenthal became somewhat excited, and although his language was moderate, still I saw that he felt very bitterly the attitude of England towards Austria, and he seemed to imply that the difficulties which lay in the way of her coming to terms with Turkey and Serbia were in great part due to us. He was very careful to state that he had no official complaints to make against His Majesty's Government, whose attitude, he was ready to confess, had been perfectly correct, but he added most solemnly that the attacks which had been made upon Austria by a whole section of the British press, and the encouragement which it had given to Turkey and Serbia to resist Austria, were likely, if continued much longer, to definitely put an end to the traditional good feeling which had so long existed between Austria and Great Britain and lead perhaps to very serious consequences. He felt sure that if the British Government fully realised this danger, they would make an effort to give a better direction to those newspapers which were, he assured me, a real menace to the maintenance of the peace of Europe. I told him that it was especially difficult for a liberal Government in England to interfere with the free expression of public opinion in the newspapers, and that it seemed to me that if Austria acted in a conciliatory manner towards Turkey and Serbia, she would win for herself the approbation of the whole world. As he lay [*sic*] so much stress upon his complaints against the English press. I promised His Excellency that I would report to you what he had said to me with regard to it.

I then said to him that a good deal of anxiety was felt abroad with regard to the ever increasing armaments on the Servian frontiers. In discussing this matter, he said to me that he would absolutely refuse to accept any official representations of the Powers on this subject, in fact I found His Excellency as regards Serbia most unbending and determined to face all eventualities which might arise from the present situation. I observed that the more troops one accumulated along the frontiers, the more likely it would be that some deplorable incident would occur which would lead to the outbreak of hostilities. He replied that Austria was pacific and would not break the peace; if an incident occurred it would be due to Servian arrogance. Austria was not afraid of war if war must come; she would not draw back from her present policy; if war broke out, the blame must lie with those who encouraged Serbia—I saw that by this he meant England. He showed considerable agitation when alluding to this subject, and he seemed to me to make an effort to keep calm. I assured His Excellency that he was entirely mistaken if he thought that any serious person in England desired to encourage Serbia to rush into a war with Austria, and I added that he could feel sure that the advice of the British Government to that of Serbia would always be strongly in favour of the maintenance of peace. This desirable end, however, I added, could be materially forwarded if Austria would only show some slight amiability towards Serbia and try and win sympathy for herself in that country by showing some kindness towards her. In discussing the question whether some economic advantages could not be voluntarily given to Serbia by Austria, he hinted to me that Austria was in no way desirous of being hard upon that country and that if the Servians wished to find an outlet for their trade on the seaboard, he might take into his favourable consideration the construction of a railway from the Servian frontier to a Dalmatian port.

As regards the possibility of a Russian intervention in favour of Serbia, should hostilities break out between Austria and that country, His Excellency told me that

he knew Russia as well as his pocket, and that he was perfectly well aware that she was not at present in a financial position to wage war. As regards the influence of the Pan-Slavist press, he declared that he did not believe that it was as influential as some people imagined. In his opinion the Russian Government could hold that press well in hand if they really desired to do so.

The conversation was a long one and the impression it left upon my mind was that Baron von Aehrenthal was determined to make me believe that Austria had made up her mind to carry matters through as regards Serbia without fear of Russia, and that she would brook no intervention in that direction. As regards Turkey I think he is sincerely desirous of coming to some arrangement.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

Baron d'A[ehrenthal] knowing that he is [in] the wrong uses offensive language towards England—which however does not strengthen his case.

E. R.

No. 485.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 43269/31738/08/44A.

Foreign Office, December 14, 1908.

Tel. (No. 213.)

D. 6:30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 99.⁽¹⁾

It is satisfactory to learn that your impression, after conversation with B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal, is that he is anxious to be conciliatory and to come to terms with Turkey. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] have repeatedly declared from the beginning that an agreement between Turkey and Austria on the basis of compensation to Turkey is essential, in order to obtain the ratification by a Conference of the Powers of the change in the Treaty of Berlin created by the new situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] would welcome such a solution and hope that it may be found possible for the Austrian Gov[ernment] to offer concessions to Serbia and Montenegro which would satisfy the latter Powers and thus maintain peace.

It is inadvisable to refer again to the idea of a guaranteed Turkish loan since this proposal has been already rejected by the Porte and could not be repeated.

B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal's views as to England's responsibility for the present situation are on a par with the statements in part of the Austrian press, which writes as if it were England and not Austria which had first disturbed the *status quo*. The difficulties of the situation arise from the feelings in Turkey, Serbia, Montenegro, Russia and Italy which are due solely to the arbitrary step taken by Austria. It is absurd to say that these have been caused by or are in any way dependent upon the British press.

You can continue to work for an agreement between Austria and Turkey, which will remove one great obstacle to the peaceful settlement desired by us, but we must bear in mind that this is not the only obstacle and that our diplomatic support is promised to Russia in endeavouring to settle the Servian and Montenegrin difficulty. Baron d'Aehrenthal must therefore not be led to suppose that if he settles with Turkey, we shall support him in a stiff attitude of resistance on the other points.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 526-7, No. 488.]

No. 486.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, December 15, 1908.*

F.O. 43857/31738/08/44A.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 300.) Confidential.

R. 9.10 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs read to me to-day a telegram from Russian Ambassador, saying that he had been given by Mr. Mallet a short summary of interview of Sir F. Cartwright with Baron von Aehrenthal. He mentioned specially language of Baron von Aehrenthal in regard to Servia, and also that he had expressed his conviction that Russia would not go to war.⁽¹⁾ Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs asked whether I had any information.

I replied that I had received telegraphic report of Sir F. Cartwright, and I related to him confidentially the substance. He asked whether I would give him a short summary to show to the Emperor to-day. As the Russian Ambassador has already been informed of the substance, I gave privately to Minister for Foreign Affairs a short résumé of certain portions of Sir F. Cartwright's telegram. He expressed his uneasiness as to Baron von Aehrenthal's language in regard to Servia, as he believes that Baron von Aehrenthal wishes to clear up matters with Turkey in order to deal then with Servia.

He marked that if Austria attacked Servia there might be explosion of Russian public opinion, which might force the hands of the Government. He did not see what Servia had recently been doing which could be called provocation, and he wished that some means could be found for encouraging the peace party in Austria or for mediating between Austria and Servia. After he has seen the Emperor I dare say he will speak again to me.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 527, No. 483, and pp. 529-30, No. 484.]

No. 487.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Cartwright,

December 16, 1908.

Mensdorff asked me today whether I had heard from you since you arrived at Vienna.⁽²⁾

I told him I had, and that your conversation with d'Aehrenthal had been friendly in form, but that you found there was considerable resentment in Austria against the line taken by the English press.

I went on to tell him that the attacks made upon England in the Austrian press were most unjustifiable: they accused us of being the authors of the trouble, as if it had been we who had annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina and disturbed the "status quo." If, at any time, I were to allow myself to be irritated by the press, I could not imagine greater irritation than that caused by these articles. As far as the press was concerned, I considered that we were the injured party.

Count Mensdorff complained that the articles in the British press were being used in Montenegro as evidence that England would give support much beyond the limits stated by the British Government. He had heard, for instance, from Count Apponyi, that the Austrians understood perfectly well our sympathy with the new régime in Turkey, but that they could not understand our encouragement of Servia and Montenegro in the attacks upon Austria.

I told him how Mr. Braham, in lecturing the other day to an audience of working-men on Turkish affairs, had given an account of the internal evolution of reform in

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 1.]

(2) [For Count Mensdorff's account, *v. G.P. XXVI*, I, p. 344.]

Turkey, and had stopped short at the outbreak of the revolution, without mentioning Austria. Several working-men had then asked him to explain the Austrian action, saying that they could not understand why this blow had been dealt to Turkey at a moment when the reforms were in a critical position, and that it was very hard lines for the new régime. This feeling was perfectly spontaneous, and it was bound to find expression.

The British press was not in the least under our control, though I understood that a considerable portion of the Austrian press was much more under the control of Government than ours was.

Count Mensdorff said the control of the Austrian Government over the newspapers had been exaggerated; but the "*Fremden Blatt*," which was more connected with the Government than other papers were had taken a very moderate line. He had always recognised that I was not responsible for what was said in the British press.

I told him that, if the consequences of the annexation of Bosnia had been within my control, I should not have taken the serious view which I had of the Austrian action. It was precisely because the feeling which had been aroused in Turkey, Russia, Italy, Servia and Montenegro was so strong and spontaneous that I thought the situation serious.

Count Mensdorff went on to say that the personal hostility between Baron d'Aehrenthal and M. Iswolsky was a great difficulty: but these were transitory factors, and the relations between Austria and Russia would, he believed, come right in spite of the personal irritation between the two men.

I told him, speaking quite privately, that I too felt much irritation with Baron d'Aehrenthal. Baron d'Aehrenthal had told us, three days before the declaration of Bulgarian independence, that it would be unfriendly to make representations at Sofia without any evidence that Bulgaria contemplated this step. He had told us that he had not received any information to this effect from the Austrian Agent at Sofia, who was returning on the following Wednesday, and would be instructed to report. As a matter of fact, Bulgaria declared her independence on the Monday, before the Agent could return.

Mensdorff said it was quite true that the Agent had been on leave.

I said I was sure that when Baron d'Aehrenthal spoke he must have known of the intention of Bulgaria: Prince Ferdinand had then been quite recently in Vienna.

If Baron d'Aehrenthal had told me frankly that things were so far advanced that it was no good making representations at Sofia, and that we must make up our minds to accept what could not be prevented, I should not have felt the irritation which I had at the answer he had given us.

I told Mensdorff, however, that I agreed that foreign affairs must be conducted without reference to personal feelings: and as far as I was concerned I could assure him that I kept any personal irritation I might feel about the press or anything else in a separate compartment.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

No. 488.

Communication from Russian Embassy.—December 23, 1908.

M. Isvolski to Count Benckendorff.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 44886/31738/08/44.

(Confidentiel.)

(Télégraphique.)

Saint-Pétersbourg, le 8 (21) Décembre, 1908.

Notre représentant à Vienne, en remettant notre dépêche circulaire au B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal est chargé d'ajouter verbalement, que nous espérons que le

⁽¹⁾ [v. M. Isvolski's explanation to Count Pourtalès, G.P. XXVI, I, pp. 345-6.]

Gouv[ernemen]t Austro-Hongrois verra dans l'attitude adoptée par le Gouv[ernemen]t Im[péria]l la preuve de notre sincère désir de conciliation, et de lui faire observer que dans cette dépêche nous avons eu soin de borner nos objections à la question de la Conférence, n'y touchant d'aucune façon le fonds des questions portées sur le programme, y compris celle de l'annexion. Ceci laisse toute latitude aux négociations ultérieures, lesquelles, d'après nous, doivent se poursuivre entre toutes les Puis[san]ces.

Désirant sincèrement que ces négociations aboutissent à une détente générale nous comptons fermement que le Cab[ine]t de Londres contribuera par ses conseils à Vienne, à ce que l'Autriche, se montre de son côté favorable à un règlement équitable de la situation. Veuillez exprimer ce qui précède confidentiellement au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères et m'informer par télégraphe de l'impression produite par la dépêche circulaire.

Annex.

Circular Despatch from M. Isvolski to the Representatives of Russia at Berlin, Vienna, Paris, London, Rome, and Constantinople, December 6 (19), 1908.

Le 24 Septembre/7 Octobre, a[nnée] c[ourante], le Comte Berchtold communiqua au Cabinet IMPÉRIAL une dépêche circulaire par laquelle le Baron d'Aehrenthal informait les Représentants de l'Autriche-Hongrie de deux décisions prises par le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal : celui-ci "renonçait à faire valoir à l'avenir ses droits par rapport au Sandjak de Novi-Bazar" et "reprenait, quant à la Bosnie et à l'Herzégovine, son entière liberté d'action." A la même date une série d'actes promulgués à Budapest étendait les droits souverains de S[a] M[ajesté] l'Empereur François Joseph sur les deux provinces susindiquées; deux jours auparavant le Prince Ferdinand de Bulgarie avait assumé le titre Royal et proclamé l'indépendance de la Bulgarie.

Dans l'un, comme dans l'autre cas, l'Europe s'est trouvée devant un acte unilatéral apportant une modification de fait à l'ordre de choses établi par le traité de Berlin.

Or, en 1871 les Puissances Européennes, réunies en Conférence à Londres, avaient solennellement reconnu le principe essentiel du droit des gens qu'aucune Puissance ne peut se délier des engagements d'un traité, ni en modifier les stipulations, qu'à la suite de l'assentiment des parties contractantes au moyen d'une entente amicale.

Depuis lors, ce principe nous l'avons, pour notre part, constamment observé, et bien que le traité de Berlin renfermât des clauses particulièrement onéreuses tant pour la Russie que pour les États Balkaniques, auxquels nous avons de tout temps porté un intérêt traditionnel, nous n'avons jamais cherché à en enfreindre les stipulations.

Il est évident que toute déviation de ce principe est de nature à fortement ébranler les bases de l'équilibre politique existant et, par conséquent, à mettre en danger la paix générale; en effet, les actes accomplis par l'Autriche-Hongrie et par la Bulgarie ont eu pour résultat immédiat de provoquer une situation des plus tendues dans la péninsule des Balkans et de plonger l'Europe dans un état d'inquiétude qui dure encore.

La Turquie, en sa qualité de Puissance directement lésée, ne manqua pas de protester formellement auprès des Puissances signataires du traité de Berlin contre cette double infraction audit traité; cette protestation semblait d'autant plus mériter l'attention des Puissances, que la Turquie, absorbée par la consolidation de ses réformes intérieures, avait particulièrement besoin de ménagements et d'appui moral; aussi le Représentant de la Russie à Constantinople reçut-il l'ordre de déclarer à la Sublime Porte que le Gouvernement IMPÉRIAL estimait que le traité de Berlin ne pouvait subir de modification sans un accord entre les Puissances signataires de ce traité. La même déclaration fut faite au Gouvernement Ottoman par les Représentants de plusieurs autres Puissances.

En même temps l'idée suggérée par la Turquie de réunir une Conférence Européenne donnait lieu à un échange de vues confidentiel entre les Cabinets : ceux-ci durent reconnaître que les derniers événements ayant sensiblement modifié l'état de choses dans la péninsule des Balkans, la Conférence aurait à s'occuper encore d'autres questions qui s'imposaient à l'attention des Puissances, notamment de la revision de plusieurs stipulations surannées du traité de Berlin et de satisfactions à donner à certains intérêts légitimes de la Turquie et des Etats Balcaniques.

Votre Excellence connaît le projet de programme de la Conférence en 9 points proposé comme base à une entente entre les Puissances. Ce projet fait depuis plus de deux mois l'objet de laborieux pourparlers privés entre les différents Cabinets, mais aucun accord définitif n'a encore pu être établi à son sujet.

La principale difficulté consistait jusqu'ici dans une différence entre le point de vue du Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois et celui du Gouvernement IMPERIAL de Russie sur la compétence de la future Conférence.

Le Cabinet de Vienne tout en admettant que la question de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine ainsi que celle du Sandjak de Novi-Bazar figurassent au programme de la Conférence, déclarait que ces deux questions ne pourraient plus former l'objet d'une discussion; ayant engagé des pourparlers avec la Sublime Porte en vue d'une entente directe entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Turquie, le Cabinet de Vienne exigeait que la Conférence se bornât à constater cette entente et à procéder à l'abrogation de l'article 25 du traité de Berlin.

Le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg ne croyait pas, pour sa part, pouvoir se ranger à une pareille opinion.

Il nous paraissait en effet évident que l'Autriche-Hongrie ayant été investie du droit d'occuper la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine et de tenir garnison dans le Sandjak de Novi-Bazar non par un arrangement particulier avec la Turquie, mais par le traité de Berlin, aucune modification de ces droits ne pouvait avoir lieu sans une entente entre toutes les Puissances signataires dudit traité.

Le cas actuel offrait d'ailleurs une entière analogie avec celui qui avait fourni à l'Europe l'occasion de formuler le principe du droit des gens qui servait de base à notre raisonnement.

En effet, lorsqu'en 1871, à la suite de l'acte unilatéral par lequel la Russie avait déclaré se délier de certaines clauses du traité de Paris, il fut question de réunir une Conférence, les Puissances ne consentirent à y prendre part qu'à la condition expresse qu'elle se réunirait sans que rien ne fût arrêté d'avance quant à ses résultats : c'est ce qui fut constaté à la première séance de la Conférence par son Président Lord Granville, lequel déclara que les questions qui lui étaient soumises devraient être examinées et discutées "sans parti-pris et avec une entière liberté."

Quant à l'entente directe projetée entre le Cabinet de Vienne et la Sublime Porte, le Cabinet IMPERIAL pensait qu'elle contribuerait certainement à acheminer la question vers une solution, mais qu'elle ne saurait cependant préjuger la sanction définitive, ni empêcher une libre discussion entre les Puissances.

Enfin le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg estimait que la Conférence ne pourrait guère se borner à une simple abrogation de l'article 25 du traité de Berlin. Sous ce rapport nous devons encore une fois nous référer au précédent de la Conférence de Londres, car cette Conférence avait eu pour résultat non seulement l'abrogation des articles 11, 13, et 14 du traité de Paris, mais la conclusion d'un traité spécial, portant modification du traité susmentionné. Il y aurait donc lieu, pensions nous, pour la future Conférence, au cas où les Puissances tomberaient d'accord sur la question de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine, non seulement d'abroger l'article 25 du traité de Berlin, mais encore de le remplacer par une stipulation définissant d'une manière précise la nouvelle situation de ces deux provinces.

Votre Excellence appréciera certainement toute l'importance du débat survenu entre nous et le Cabinet de Vienne; heureusement ce débat semble aujourd'hui pouvoir se résoudre d'une manière acceptable aux deux parties.

Dans une communication que nous venons de recevoir du Cabinet de Vienne, celui-ci n'insiste plus sur son exigence de soustraire la question de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine à toute discussion entre les Puissances et propose un nouveau mode de procéder : les Cabinets ne se borneraient pas à s'accorder avant la Conférence sur l'énumération des points du programme, mais commenceraient par entrer dans un échange de vues préalable sur le fond des questions auxquelles se réfèrent ces différents points; cet échange de vues aboutirait à certaines formules qui traceraient des limites précises à la discussion en Conférence.

Un pareil mode de procéder qui consiste à remplacer la discussion en Conférence par des négociations préalables entre les Cabinets, n'est pas sans offrir à nos yeux de sérieux inconvénients à cause surtout de son caractère compliqué et de sa lenteur. D'autre part, nous ne saurions méconnaître qu'il est de nature à écarter le danger de divergences trop sensibles au sein même de la Conférence. Il nous semble de plus sauvegarder d'une manière suffisante le principe essentiel que nous avons soutenu dès le début et d'après lequel toutes les questions qui font partie du programme, y compris le point 2—Bosnie et Herzégovine,—ont un caractère Européen, ne peuvent être définitivement résolues que d'un commun accord entre toutes les Puissances signataires du traité de Berlin et doivent dès lors faire l'objet d'une libre discussion entre les Cabinets.

Dans ces conditions le Cabinet IMPERIAL, désireux de faire preuve à son tour d'un esprit de conciliation, est prêt à ne pas s'opposer au mode de procéder susindiqué; il vient de suggérer au Cabinet de Vienne de saisir de cette proposition les autres Puissances; si celles-ci se montrent disposées à y adhérer, le Cabinet IMPERIAL ne manquera pas, au cours des négociations qui suivront, de faire connaître ses vues sur les points du programme de la Conférence qui sont de nature à intéresser particulièrement la Russie.

Vous voudrez bien donner lecture de la présente dépêche à Mr. le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères et lui en laisser copie s'il le désire.

Veuillez, &c.

No. 489.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 45056/31738/08/44A.

(No. 227.) Confidential.

Vienna, D. December 23, 1908.

Sir,

R. December 28, 1908.

I was received by Baron von Aehrenthal yesterday afternoon and I took the opportunity of enquiring of him whether he was satisfied with the progress of the negotiations with Turkey.

. . . .⁽¹⁾ To a question of mine whether His Excellency had received any information as to the existence of Servian bands in Bosnia, rumours of which I reported to you in my telegram No. 106 of the 21st instant.⁽²⁾ Baron von Aehrenthal professed to be absolutely in the dark with regard to this matter, but he said that he knew that Servian and Bulgarian bands were being organised for service in Macedonia. As to a *coup de main* on the Sanjak by Servia and Montenegro, he did not believe it likely, first, because neither of these countries had an interest of picking a quarrel with Turkey at the present moment, and in the second place, because he knew that the Turks had greatly strengthened their military position in that district.

In alluding to the Russian Note which has just been received here, Baron von Aehrenthal expressed himself, if not as dissatisfied with it, at least as perplexed by it. Its language was so vague that it was difficult to seize on any definite proposal made by Russia. The impression he got from the Note was that Russia desired now to avoid the meeting of a Conference. He said to me that the mysterious policy pursued

⁽¹⁾ [The part dealing with Turkey is omitted as of no special importance.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

by Monsieur Isvolsky was one of the main causes of the nervousness which prevailed throughout Europe. For him the position of Austria-Hungary was clear: she did not object to a Conference but she must first obtain from Turkey the recognition of the annexation of the two Provinces. That achieved, the political horizon would be brighter. As regards the pretensions of Serbia and Montenegro, Baron von Aehrenthal seemed willing to meet them in the most conciliatory manner on the basis of economic concessions, such as railways, free ports, etc. I dropped an allusion to the possible establishment of a line of free transit through Bosnia: without approving of it, His Excellency did not combat the idea very vigorously.

At the close of the interview, Baron von Aehrenthal volunteered the statement that he had recently observed signs of a better disposition in the British press towards Austria-Hungary, and he hoped that if this continued the relations of the two countries to each other would rapidly improve. However, he complained considerably of Mr. Noel Buxton's activity in Serbia and he went so far as to assert that this gentleman disposed of considerable funds and that he employed a large number of agents in the nefarious work of propagating aspirations among the ignorant Serbian population which it would be impossible for the European Powers ever to satisfy without the shedding of a great deal of blood. I pointed out how difficult it was for His Majesty's Government to interfere with the liberty of action of a British subject, but I took it upon myself to assure him that the British Government would never encourage anything which could create difficulties in the way of a peaceful settlement of the questions which were now agitating the Near East.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTES.

We have had most of this by telegraph. Baron d'Aehrenthal complains of Mr. Noel Buxton's activity in fomenting trouble in Serbia.

J. A. C. T.
R. P. M.

B[aro]n Aehrenthal repeated the absurd legend that Mr. Buxton disposed of considerable funds for Serbian propaganda. But for this he seems to have been more moderate than of late.

C. H.

If Mr. Buxton is referred to again Baron d'Aehrenthal should be asked on what information he makes the statement that Mr. Buxton disposes of funds and employs agents in Serbia and may be told that though Mr. Buxton is not under any control I should either stop or expose such proceedings if I found there was a word of truth in the reports of them which I do not believe there is.

E. G.

[ED. NOTE.—The text of Tel. No. 104 from Sir F. Cartwright to Sir E. Grey of December 21 is given in *App. V.* together with Sir E. Grey's reply, Tel. No. 215 of December 23, 1908, *infra*, p. 830.]

No. 490.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Vienna, December 24, 1908.

Since writing to you last week I have had my first official interview with Baron von Aehrenthal, and I have reported in an official despatch the gist of our conversation.⁽²⁾

This time I found him less excitable than on the previous occasion when he spoke to me so strongly with regard to the tone of the English press, and he confessed that he had recently noted an improvement in it. He complained, however, bitterly of the trouble which Mr. Noel Buxton was raising for Austria in Serbia, and in spite of all I could say to the contrary I think that he harbours a suspicion that His Majesty's

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. I.]

⁽²⁾ [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

Government are not doing their utmost to control that gentleman. Baron von Aehrenthal also talked in a vague manner of the meeting at Reval as an Austrian grievance against Great Britain but his talk was so indefinite that it was difficult to seize upon any clear accusation. He admitted that we had a right to seek for our alliances where we liked, but he talked of the difficulty of understanding the recent policy of Great Britain. I got from him this much, that he attributed the revolution at Constantinople—the beginning of all the present troubles in the Balkans—to the Reval interview. When I asked him what he meant, he muttered something about England and Russia having agreed there to force Turkey to grant autonomy to Macedonia. This had aroused the indignation of the Young Turks and had precipitated events in the Balkans to the great regret of Austria-Hungary.

I am afraid that in governing circles here there is a very marked ill-will against us and much suspicion of our policy. Tschirschky, to whom I tried the other day to justify the correctness and peaceful intentions of the policy pursued by His Majesty's Government, shrugged his shoulders and said that we were responsible for the Turkish boycott against Austria-Hungary, and that that was certainly not a friendly act on our part towards the Dual Monarchy. The newspapers here continue to reproduce everything which can throw doubt on the straightforwardness of our policy: these extracts are generally culled from German newspapers, and it is evident to me that the current which is at present running against us here has been largely started from Berlin. My impression is that Germany with one hand is holding Austria-Hungary back from proceeding too far in the direction of a possible war, but at the same time she is doing her utmost to bring about a breach between this country and ourselves. Austria-Hungary must be made more and more dependent upon Germany, now that Italy seems to be definitely drifting away from the Triple Alliance.

The result of all this is that my position here is very difficult owing, as I said before, to the suspicion under which we lie and which time alone can dispel. It is an up-hill game to make people believe what is evident to ourselves but which every day they are taught by their newspapers to look at from a different point of view. If I make too strong complaints to Baron von Aehrenthal about the attitude of the Austrian press here, it might probably end in my having a flare-up with him and this would bring about no amelioration of the situation. It is difficult enough to get him to talk on any delicate matter and he is very apt to shut himself up and say nothing. Personally I do not believe that as long as he remains in power our relations will be very much improved, though they may slowly grow better. It should be remembered that any attempts which may be made by our press or by us to discredit him, with a view to bring about his fall, will only strengthen his position here. Germany will never allow the fall of Aehrenthal to be looked upon as a British triumph. He has bitter enemies here, currents are running strongly against him from many quarters, and if he is to fall, the fall must come from within and not from without the country. That Aehrenthal is conscious of the existence of these currents is evident from what he said to me, namely:—"As long as I enjoy the confidence of the Emperor, I will remain, in spite of all personal attacks which may be made upon me. When His Majesty withdraws his confidence from me—'*je ferai mes paquets et je m'en irai.*'" The German Government at heart would probably not be sorry to see him go in the natural order of things but without foreign interference.

The rivalry between Aehrenthal and Isvolsky also complicates the situation greatly: I think that Aehrenthal could yield to a great extent to Russia but he will not do so to Isvolsky. I also suspect that much of the ill-feeling displayed towards ourselves here is due to Aehrenthal's jealousy of you because you have succeeded in acquiring for England a preponderating position in deciding Balkan affairs. All this is unfortunate but until Baron von Aehrenthal goes the European situation will be complicated by these personal matters. I hear from a well informed source that Count Berchtold, the Austrian Ambassador at Petersburg, is looked upon as a possible

coming very much to the fore here. A large party, the Christian Democrats, are in favour of it, and it is rumoured that the Archduke Franz Ferdinand is inclined to support the idea as he is supposed to approve of the plan for creating a third Kingdom in the Dual Monarchy, to counterbalance the ever-increasing power of Hungary. This Slav Kingdom would consist of Croatia, Dalmatia, Istria, Bosnia, Herzegovina, etc., and it is hoped that in course of time it might attract to itself both Serbia and Montenegro. The autonomy would be a half-way house to the achievement of this. I have heard the name of Count Jules Andrassy, a Hungarian nobleman as you know, mentioned as a possible first Governor should an autonomy be granted to the two Provinces.

There seems reason to believe that Austria-Hungary is feverishly preparing for the eventuality of a war; continual detachments of troops are passing through Vienna southwards, and this takes place generally in the middle of the night. I hear from a number of persons, servants and others, who are in the reserves, that they have been called to the colours. I have also been informed that the cartridge factories have been working night and day during the last few weeks. As far as I am able to ascertain, the troops already in Bosnia amount to at least 80,000 men, but it is very difficult to get at accurate figures.

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A most unsatisfactory state of things, but Baron d'A[ehrenthal]'s accusations against England are as untrue as they are uncalled for.

E.R.

No. 491.

*Aide-mémoire communicated by the Austro-Hungarian Chargé d'Affaires on
December, 25, 1908.⁽¹⁾*

F.O. 45845/31738/08/44.

(Confidentiel.)

Vienna, December 23, 1908.

Le Cabinet de Vienne a reçu dans le temps par l'entremise du Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg et d'une manière confidentielle connaissance du programme de la Conférence qui aurait à se réunir en présence des derniers événements survenus dans les Balcons. Désireux de contribuer en tant qu'il dépendait de lui à la réalisation de l'idée de la Conférence, idée qui n'émanait pas de lui, mais dont il ne méconnaissait pas l'influence salutaire, le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal a été le premier à préciser vis-à-vis du Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg sa manière de voir quant aux différents points du programme qui lui été communiqué.

Une copie de ces deux pièces ainsi que de trois autres Aide-Mémoires échangés ensuite entre les Cabinets de Vienne et de St. Pétersbourg se trouve sous ce pli.

Il appert de ces documents que le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal continue à observer une attitude sympathique à l'égard de la réunion d'une Conférence pour les affaires du Balcan; les réserves, qu'il a cru devoir formuler pour son adhésion ne lui sont dictées que par l'intention de rendre le travail de la Conférence aussi efficace que possible.

C'est aussi dans cet ordre d'idées que le Cabinet de Vienne poursuit des négociations immédiates avec la Sublime Porte; il ne manquera pas d'informer les Puissances dès que ces négociations auront donné le résultat désiré.

⁽¹⁾ [cp. G.P. XXVI, I, Ch. 98, pp. 285-363 *passim*.]

I.— *Programme de la Conférence communiqué par le Ministère Impérial des Affaires Étrangères à Saint-Pétersbourg au Cabinet de Vienne.*

(As in pp. 453-4, No. 390.)

II.— *Réponse du Cabinet de Vienne à la communication du Programme de la Conférence, en date du 14 Novembre, 1908.*

Le Cabinet de Vienne est d'avis que la Conférence destinée à régler les différentes questions surgies à la suite des récents événements sur la Péninsule des Balcons ne saurait utilement se réunir que lorsqu'un accord préalable aura été établi entre les Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin.

Quant au programme de la dite Conférence le Cabinet de Vienne se rallie en général au projet que le Gouvernement Impérial lui a communiqué d'une manière confidentielle par l'entremise du Comte Berchtold et il est tout disposé d'entrer dans un échange de vues concernant les différents points de ce programme.

Pour ce qui est du point 1, "Bulgarie, son statut juridique et ses obligations financières à l'égard de la Turquie" le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal se déclare prêt à reconnaître le nouvel état de choses proclamé en Bulgarie; en agissant ainsi il part de la conviction que la Conférence ne sanctionnera l'indépendance de cet État que lorsque les questions financières y compris celle des chemins de fer orientaux auront été réglées.

Les points 2 et 3 "Bosnie et Herzégovine" et "Sandjak de Novibazar" pourront figurer parmi les points du programme mais il est bien entendu que l'extension des droits souverains de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale Apostolique sur la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine de même que l'évacuation du Sandjak ne pourra plus former l'objet d'une discussion. Nous désirons arriver à ce sujet à une entente avec la Sublime Porte; en constatant cette entente la Conférence procéderait à l'abrogation de l'article 25 du Traité de Berlin.

Pour les points 4 et 5 "stipulations de l'article 23 du Traité de Berlin concernant les provinces de la Turquie d'Europe" et "article 61 concernant les provinces habitées par les Arméniens," nous pensons qu'ils pourront former utilement l'objet d'une discussion destinée à mettre les dispositions des articles susmentionnés en harmonie avec le nouveau régime constitutionnel en Turquie, qui établit une égalité parfaite des droits pour tous les sujets ottomans sans distinction de race ni religion; l'application de ces principes rendrait sans objet les dispositions spéciales prévues par le Traité de Berlin.

Le point 6 "stipulations de l'article 29, limitant les droits souverains du Monténégro" ne rencontre pas d'objections auprès du Cabinet Impérial et Royal; il croit cependant devoir faire ressortir qu'il a toujours formulé certaines réserves concernant les concessions à faire au Monténégro par rapport à cet article. Ces réserves portent: à la construction d'un chemin de fer à travers le littoral monténégrin que nous voulons réaliser de concert avec le Gouvernement princier et à l'obligation de ce dernier de ne pas établir des fortifications le long des côtes ni un port militaire à Antivari.

La rédaction du point 7 "avantages à procurer à la Serbie et au Monténégro" pouvant donner lieu à des interprétations erronées il serait utile de lui substituer la version suivante "avantages économiques à procurer à la Serbie et au Monténégro."

Le Cabinet de Vienne est d'accord avec le Gouvernement Impérial sur le point 8 du programme "droits des États Balcaniques en tant que riverains du Danube;" il sympathise avec l'idée d'accorder des droits plus considérables sur le Danube tant à la Roumanie qu'à la Serbie et la Bulgarie.

Par rapport au point 9 "questions des Capitulations et des bureaux de postes étrangers en Turquie" le Cabinet de Vienne est prêt à se concerter avec les Puissances sur les modifications qui pourraient être apportées au régime actuel.

Quant au post-scriptum du programme concernant l'île de Crète, le Cabinet de Vienne n'a pas d'objections à formuler.

Les remarques qui précèdent pourront de l'avis du Cabinet de Vienne donner au Gouvernement Impérial l'occasion de préciser sa manière de voir concernant les différents points du programme.

III.—*Aide-mémoire du Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg, en date du 9 (22) Novembre, 1908.*

Le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg partage entièrement l'opinion de celui de Vienne que la Conférence destinée à régler les différentes questions surgies à la suite des récents événements sur la Péninsule des Balcons ne saurait utilement se réunir que lorsqu'un accord préalable aura été établi entre les Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin.

Le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg est d'avis qu'un pareil accord porterait naturellement sur l'étendue et le contenu du programme de la Conférence, mais que celle-ci devra avoir la faculté de discuter en toute liberté les diverses questions qui lui seront soumises.

Ceci amène le Cabinet Impérial à examiner tout d'abord les réserves formulées par le Cabinet de Vienne relativement aux points 2 et 3 du programme.

Le Cabinet de Vienne déclare que ces deux points : "Bosnie et Herzégovine" et "Sandjak de Novibazar" ne pourront figurer au programme que s'il est bien entendu que l'extension des droits souverains de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale Apostolique sur la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine, de même que l'évacuation du Sandjak, ne pourra plus former l'objet d'une discussion; le Cabinet de Vienne ajoute qu'il désire arriver à ce sujet à une entente avec la Sublime Porte et que la Conférence devrait se borner à constater cette entente et à abroger l'article 25 du Traité de Berlin.

Le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg croit devoir rappeler que lorsqu'en 1871, à la suite de l'acte unilatéral par lequel la Russie avait déclaré se délier de certaines clauses du Traité de Paris, il fut question de la réunion d'une Conférence, les Puissances ne consentirent à y prendre part qu'à la condition expresse qu'elle se réunirait sans que rien ne fût arrêté d'avance quant à ses résultats. C'est ce qui fut constaté à la première séance de la Conférence par son Président Lord Granville lequel déclara que les questions qui lui étaient soumises devraient être examinées et discutées sans parti pris et avec une entière liberté.

Pour ce qui est de l'entente que le Cabinet de Vienne désire établir avec la Sublime Porte, le Cabinet Impérial pense qu'elle contribuerait certainement à acheminer la question vers une solution; mais une pareille entente ne saurait préjuger la solution définitive, ni empêcher une libre discussion entre les Puissances, car d'après les principes solennellement reconnus par la Conférence de Londres, aucune Puissance ne peut se délier des engagements d'un Traité, ni en modifier les stipulations, sans une entente entre toutes les Parties contractantes.

Enfin, le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg estime que la Conférence ne pourrait guère se borner à une simple abrogation de l'article 25 du Traité de Berlin, mais que, suivant le précédent établi par la Conférence de Londres au cas où les Puissances tombaient d'accord sur la question qui sera soumise à leur examen, elle devrait remplacer l'article 25 par une nouvelle stipulation.

Avant d'exprimer une opinion sur les autres points du programme, le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg tiendrait à savoir, si le Cabinet de Vienne partage sa manière de voir concernant la question préjudicielle formulée ci-dessus; le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg attache une grande importance à cette question et estime, pour sa part, que la Conférence projetée devrait être placée dans des conditions en tous points conformes au précédent établi par la Conférence de Londres en 1871.

Le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg croit devoir ajouter qu'il a l'intention de soumettre sous peu le point de vue ci-dessus exposé à l'appréciation des autres Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin.

IV.—*Aide-mémoire du Cabinet de Vienne, en date du 8 Décembre, 1908.*

Le Cabinet de Vienne s'empresse de constater que les deux Gouvernements ont la même manière de voir quant à l'opportunité d'un accord préalable entre les Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin, accord sans lequel une Conférence destinée à régler les différentes questions balkaniques ne saurait utilement se réunir.

Le Cabinet de Vienne croit pouvoir en conclure que le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg est aussi anxieux que lui d'entourer la future Conférence de garanties pour le succès de sa tâche et de la préserver des dangers qui pourraient facilement résulter d'une dissension au sein même de la Conférence. Ce but qu'envisagent les deux Cabinets et qui représente un intérêt européen ne serait atteint, à notre avis, que d'une manière très imparfaite si l'accord préalable entre les Puissances se bornait strictement à l'énumération des points qui formeraient le programme de la Conférence. Ce mode ne suffirait guère à garantir un cours prompt et satisfaisant des délibérations et à écarter les causes possibles de divergences.

Nous pensons donc que l'échange de vues entre les Cabinets devrait porter aussi sur le fond des questions auxquelles se réfèrent les différents points du programme, du moins les plus importants parmi eux; cet échange de vues aboutirait, il faut l'espérer, à certaines formules qui traceraient à la discussion des limites précises.

Ainsi pour ce qui est du point 2 du programme "Bosnie et Herzégovine" le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg sera certainement disposé à limiter la discussion de façon à ne pas remettre en question le fait de l'annexion de ces provinces. Une pareille attitude du Gouvernement Impérial nous paraît d'autant moins douteuse que l'éventualité de l'annexion avait été prévue et acceptée dans divers traités antérieurs conclus entre les deux Empires. Dans des pourparlers tout récents dont le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg avait pris l'initiative celui-ci s'est montré prêt à s'engager d'observer une attitude amicale par rapport à l'annexion, en échange d'une attitude analogue du Cabinet de Vienne dans une question intéressant la Russie.

Si le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg à propos de ce point croit devoir rappeler les principes reconnus par la Conférence de Londres, le Cabinet de Vienne pourrait faire remarquer que, abstraction faite d'autre changement survenu depuis 1878 par rapport au traité de Berlin, le Gouvernement Impérial a jugé lui-même compatible avec ces principes de se délier, sans une entente entre toutes les Parties contractantes, de l'engagement stipulé par l'article 59 concernant le port de Batoum.

Le Cabinet de Vienne estime donc que le mode de procéder envisagé par lui contribuerait beaucoup à faciliter les travaux d'une Conférence et à écarter des difficultés qui surgiraient si on laissait à la discussion des différents points une pleine et entière liberté.

Le Cabinet de Vienne se flatte de l'espoir que le Gouvernement Impérial, auteur du projet d'une réunion des Puissances, s'inspirera du même désir de conciliation et d'entente, et en appréciant les considérations qui précèdent voudra bien faire connaître au Gouvernement Impérial et Royal son avis sur les points importants du programme de la Conférence.

V.—*Aide-mémoire du Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg, en date du 4 (17) Décembre, 1908.*

Le Cabinet Impérial ayant soumis à un examen attentif l'Aide-Mémoire du Cabinet de Vienne en date du 8 décembre c[ouran]t, croit devoir avant tout relever les points suivants qui lui semblent exiger quelques éclaircissements :

1. Le Cabinet de Vienne mentionne incidemment des pourparlers au cours desquels le Gouvernement Impérial se serait montré prêt à s'engager d'observer à

certaines conditions une attitude amicale par rapport à l'annexion de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine.

Si le Cabinet de Vienne entend se référer à l'Aide-Mémoire confidentiel du Gouvernement Impérial en date du 19 juin d[ernie]r, il est à remarquer que cette pièce, laquelle avait pour but de préciser différentes questions visées par l'accord austro-russe de 1897, établit textuellement, que d'après notre avis, "la question de la modification de l'état de choses établie par l'article 25 du Traité de Berlin c'est-à-dire de l'annexion de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine, a un caractère éminemment européen et n'est pas de nature à être réglée par une entente séparée entre la Russie et l'Autriche-Hongrie." Ce point de vue n'a jamais été abandonné par le Gouvernement Impérial; si néanmoins celui-ci s'était montré disposé en même temps à accepter la discussion de cette question avec le Cabinet de Vienne, une pareille discussion ne pouvait évidemment avoir qu'un caractère préalable et préparatoire à une entente générale.

2. A propos du principe reconnu par la Conférence de Londres, le Cabinet de Vienne fait remarquer que le Gouvernement Impérial a jugé lui-même compatible avec ce principe de se délier, sans une entente entre toutes les Parties contractantes, de l'engagement stipulé par l'article 59 du Traité de Berlin, concernant le port de Batoum.

Sur ce point le Cabinet Impérial ne peut que se référer au texte même de l'article 59 lequel ne contient aucun engagement, mais seulement une déclaration de Sa Majesté l'Empereur de Russie ayant un caractère purement unilatéral et spontané: la résolution prise subséquemment par le Gouvernement Impérial relativement au port de Batoum n'a donc enfreint aucune stipulation arrêtée en commun par les Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin.

3. Le Cabinet de Vienne attribue au Gouvernement Impérial l'origine du projet d'une réunion des Puissances; tout en n'attachant à ce point aucune importance, le Cabinet Impérial croit devoir cependant observer que le projet d'une Conférence européenne a été émis en premier lieu non par lui, mais par le Gouvernement ottoman, dans sa dépêche circulaire concernant la proclamation de l'indépendance de la Bulgarie.

En passant à l'examen de la substance de l'Aide-Mémoire du Cabinet de Vienne en date du 8 décembre c[ouran]t, le Cabinet Impérial constate, avec une vive satisfaction que le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal n'insiste plus sur le point de vue exposé dans sons Mémoire précédent, à savoir que la question de l'extension des droits souverains de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale Apostolique sur la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine, de même que celle de l'évacuation du Sandjak, ne pourront plus faire l'objet d'une discussion, et que les Puissances réunies en Conférence devront se borner à la constatation d'une entente éventuelle entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Turquie et à l'abrogation de l'article 25 du Traité de Berlin.

En effet, le Cabinet de Vienne en formulant l'opinion que l'accord préalable entre les Puissances ne devrait pas se borner strictement à l'énumération des points du programme, émet en même temps l'avis que l'échange de vues entre les Cabinets devra porter sur le fond des questions auxquelles se réfèrent les différents points du programme, par conséquent aussi sur la question de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine. Cet échange de vues aboutirait à certaines formules qui traceraient des limites précises à la discussion en Conférence.

Dans ces conditions, tout en croyant que le mode de procéder suggéré par le Cabinet de Vienne, offre, à cause de sa lenteur, de sérieux inconvénients, le Cabinet Impérial désireux de faire preuve, de son côté, d'un esprit de conciliation, est prêt à ne pas s'y opposer, si les autres Puissances sont disposées à y adhérer. Le Cabinet de Vienne pourrait proposer le mode de procéder susindiqué aux Cabinets, auxquels le Gouvernement Impérial ne manquera pas de notifier, de son côté, sa manière de voir à ce sujet.

Pour ce qui concerne le désir du Cabinet de Vienne que le Cabinet Impérial fasse connaître au Gouvernement Impérial et Royal son avis sur les points importants du programme de la Conférence, le Cabinet Impérial se fera un devoir, au cas où le mode de procéder suggéré par le Cabinet de Vienne est accepté par les Puissances, de présenter au cours des négociations qui suivront ses vues sur les points du programme qui sont de nature à intéresser particulièrement la Russie.

No. 492.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 279/26/09/44A.

(No. 609.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. December 27, 1908.

R. January 4, 1909.

I enquired of Monsieur Iswolsky whether he had read the Circular Note which the Bulgarian Government had recently issued, as it seemed to me hardly conducive to a speedy termination of the negotiations between Sofia and Stamboul. His Excellency did not appear to attach much importance to the tone of the Bulgarian Note, but he said that he was most anxious that the negotiations between the two countries should speedily terminate. In fact he had just received a visit from the Bulgarian Agent and he had told Monsieur Tzokoff that it was highly desirable that the discussions between the Bulgarian and Turkish Governments should be pushed rapidly to a conclusion. He had pointed out that he had heard that possibly Austria-Hungary might offer to pay Turkey some compensation on account of the Bosnian and Herzegovinian share of the Public debt; and that if this principle were admitted by Austria it would doubtless be applied to Bulgaria. It was therefore to the advantage of the latter to offer, without delay, a lump sum of a reasonable amount in discharge of all obligations. In fixing the Amount the Bulgarian Government should be more liberal than had been their last proposal. Monsieur Tzokoff had replied that he was sure that his Government would not go beyond the figure of 82,000,000 francs.

Monsieur Iswolsky thought that the time had come when some Power should propose a fixed amount, and when the other Powers had agreed, should inform the Bulgarian Government, that it was desirable that they should pay that sum. France, as a Creditor State, could not well be that Power: and Russia, for obvious reasons, did not wish to undertake the duty. He was telegraphing to Count Benckendorff to ascertain your views: and I imagine that he hoped that His Majesty's Government would agree to make the proposal, which would be an ungrateful duty, as it would be difficult apparently to determine a sum which would be regarded as satisfactory both by Turkey and by Bulgaria.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 493.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 45415/31738/08/44.

Tel. (No. 679.)

Foreign Office, December 28, 1908.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Iswolsky's speech⁽¹⁾ seems to me very satisfactory: I am gratified by and in entire accord with his references to England and I am glad he emphasized the need for community of feeling between the Balkan States and the combination of all three of them with Turkey for defence of common interests. I am quite in favour of this and will encourage it, whenever I can.

⁽¹⁾ [This speech in the Imperial Duma made on December 25 was generally interpreted as being conciliatory in character.]

No. 494.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, December 30, 1908.*

D. 8.25 P.M.

R. 10.15 P.M.

F.O. 45544/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 319.) Confidential.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs is perplexed and perturbed at the proposal of the Austro-Hungarian Government that the Russian Government should join in representations at the Sublime Porte that the Ottoman Government should be lenient and conciliatory in their negotiations with Bulgaria. As the Austrian proposal is based on the recent Bulgarian Circular, he cannot divest himself of the opinion that there has been some prearranged plan, and he considers that as matters stand Austria is the last Power to suggest representations at Constantinople. He says that he has telegraphed to Russian Ambassador in London, and is waiting for your views and those of the French Cabinet. He himself wishes to reply shortly that all necessary advice has already been given to Turkey, and that none further is required.

He is also much vexed at allusions in the recently published Austrian Memorandum and correspondence to the Secret Agreements of 1897 between Russia and Austria,⁽¹⁾ and which proceeding he considers most incorrect, as the assent of the Russian Government was never asked. He remarked that above was all of a piece with Baron Aehrenthal's diplomacy, and that he would speak to me more fully in a day or two.

(¹) [*cp. infra*, pp. 547-8, No. 498.]

No. 495.

Sir Edward Grey to Count Benckendorff.

F.O. 44886/31738/08/44.

Your Excellency,

Foreign Office, December 30, 1908.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the circular desp[atch] from the Russian Gov[ernmen]t, which you were good enough to communicate to me on the 23rd inst[ant],⁽¹⁾ setting forth their views in regard to the negotiations with Austria-Hungary concerning the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] concur in the views expressed by the Russian Gov[ernmen]t and will await a proposal from the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t as to entering on a preliminary discussion between the Powers of the points to be laid before a European Conference.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t will gladly co-operate with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t in endeavouring to bring about an equitable solution of the present situation.

[I am, &c.

F. GREY.]

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 533-5, No. 488.]

No. 496.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 284/26/09/44A.

(No. 614.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. December 30, 1908.

Sir,

R. January 4, 1909.

Monsieur Iswolsky at his weekly reception to-day, asked what I thought of the last move on the part of the Austrian Government. I told him that I did not know exactly to what he referred. He said he referred to their desire that the Russian Government should join with them, basing their action on the Bulgarian Circular, in urging the Ottoman Government to be lenient and conciliatory to Bulgaria. I said

that I had heard nothing whatever on the subject; and I thought that the Bulgarian Circular was more a *boutade* on the part of Prince Ferdinand, and that no one had paid much attention to it.

Monsieur Iswolsky said that this might be so, but that he had been much puzzled, and was rather uneasy, at Austria having come forward with the strange proposal that representations should be made at Constantinople. It seemed to him that there was some preconcerted plan between Bulgaria and Austria, and that in view of the relations at present existing between Turkey and Austria he was not at all inclined to join with the latter in taking any action at Constantinople. He had telegraphed to the Russian Ambassadors at Paris and at London, and he would await the views of the British and French Cabinets; but his opinion was that a somewhat curt reply should be sent to the effect that all necessary advice had already been given at Constantinople, and that there was no need for any further steps. He did not, however, like the look of this new move on the part of Austria. What could it mean? I said that I was unable to tell him; but I admitted that it seemed odd that Austria should take up the cudgels for Bulgaria at a moment when she was engaged on delicate negotiations on her own behalf with Turkey.

Later in the afternoon, Monsieur Tzokoff, the Bulgarian Agent, called on me, and plunged in *medias res* in a rather agitated manner. He said that the negotiations between Turkey and Bulgaria had come to a deadlock and that the latter would not resume them until Turkey showed her willingness to do so. Monsieur Iswolsky had of late been urging him to impress on his Government the necessity for Bulgaria to come speedily to terms with Turkey: but he was absolutely convinced that his Government could not, and would not, budge an inch beyond their last proposals: and if matters continued as they were, his Government would be compelled to take the last step. I said that I knew what he meant, and that it would be a most rash step. I asked what was the reason why Bulgaria had issued her Circular; it was hardly likely to help on negotiations. He replied that it was to make the situation clear: he had telegraphed to his Government after his last interview with Monsieur Iswolsky and had received textually the following short telegram. "We would prefer war to going beyond our last offer." I asked what possible justification could Bulgaria find for going to war? He said that the boycott of Bulgarian goods in Turkey was ruining trade, and the uncertainty as to the future was becoming intolerable. He presumed neither Great Britain nor France desired war. I said that most certainly neither Country dreamed of such a calamity, and, I might add neither did Russia. He said that perhaps the Russian Government did not: and I interrupted him by saying, neither the Government nor the Duma, nor the public. He admitted that this might be so: but in any case it was clear that the Powers should, if they wished to avoid a calamity, put pressure on Turkey to be moderate and accept the Bulgarian terms, for at Constantinople lay the difficulty. Bulgaria had offered 20 million francs more than she need properly be asked to pay; and this she had done in order to show her conciliatory disposition. He cited many figures in proof of his assertion. If war occurred, he was sure it would not be localized. "Why, if Austria declared war, would Bulgaria remain with her arms folded? Of course she would not." I asked why should Austria declare war against Turkey? She was negotiating with Turkey, and I was sure that no responsible Austrian statesman had the slightest desire to cause a conflict. M. Tzokow said that he was not so sure of that. I asked him if any Cabinet had made any reply to the Bulgarian Circular. He said that the Austrian Government had given it a very friendly reception, and he knew that Prince Fürstenberg, the Austrian Chargé d'Affaires, had requested the Russian Government to join in representations at Constantinople. I enquired why had Austria developed such solicitude for Bulgarian wishes? He said that he did not precisely know; but that probably Austria wished to show her friendly feelings towards Bulgaria. M. Iswolsky, he said, had warned him that Austria might compromise Bulgaria. This, he said, could not be the case. Of course Bulgaria, a small State, was flattered by the attentions of a great Power, especially in present circumstances.

At this point, unfortunately, another visitor was announced, and M. Tzokow broke off the conversation. I would have wished to have pressed him a little more as to the relations between Austria and Bulgaria; as, though M. Tzokow is apt, in present circumstances, to talk occasionally a little wildly, and is, I dare say, anxious to impress or alarm his listener with the desperate determination of his Government, his conversation, after the suspicions which had been intimated to me by M. Iswolsky but an hour previously as to a preconcerted plan between Austria and Bulgaria, struck me as significant, and I have therefore ventured to report it.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 497.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, December 31. 1908.

F.O. 45699/31738/08/44A.

D. 2.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 113.) Most Confidential.

R. 5.20 P.M.

French Chargé d'Affaires told me in strict confidence that the German Ambassador had informed him that Germany's position towards Austria was very delicate and that it was very difficult for her to offer advice to Baron d'Aehrenthal but that if opportunity presented itself for doing so the advice would be that Austria should act in a conciliatory spirit towards Turkey and even offer under certain circumstances pecuniary indemnity.

This tends to confirm tel[egram] from Berlin No. 80 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

It seems to me as if Germany were endeavouring to use France as channel for communicating German views to Baron d'Aehrenthal.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

CHAPTER XLI.

THE BOSNIAN CRISIS II, 1909.

No. 498.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 2184/26/09/44A.

(No. 4.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. January 2, 1909.

R. January 18, 1909.

Monsieur Iswolsky asked me yesterday whether I had seen the documents which Baron d'Aehrenthal had recently communicated to the Powers. I replied that I would probably receive copies of them by the next Messenger, but that I had seen summaries of them in the newspapers. His Excellency said that he did not allude to what had been published, but to a Memorandum which gave a most misleading idea of what had passed in June last between the two Governments. When I received the documents he would be glad if I brought them to him, and he would explain to me exactly what had passed. He had telegraphed to Count Benckendorff and to Monsieur de Nelidoff to give the necessary explanations to the Cabinets of London and of Paris, but it would be preferable if he gave me personally full details, and I would then be able to appreciate the unqualifiable action of Baron d'Aehrenthal. He did not like using strong language, but he could only characterize Baron d'Aehrenthal's methods as "une infamie." I asked whether he took exception to the allusion which Baron d'Aehrenthal had apparently made to previous arrangements which had been concluded on various occasions between the Austrian and Russian Governments. He replied that the whole proceedings of Baron d'Aehrenthal were exceedingly incorrect, but he especially objected to his having alluded to the *pourparlers* in June last in a manner which would give the other Cabinets to believe that at that date the question of annexation had been debated between the two Governments. He doubted if in June last, before even the revolution had occurred in Turkey, Baron d'Aehrenthal had in his mind the intention of annexing the two provinces: though now he apparently desired to make it appear as if Russia had at that date been willing to entertain such a project. After the Sandjak railway incident it became necessary to look into the question of the manner in which it had affected the Secret Agreements of 1897, and to examine how matters exactly stood between the two Governments. The status of Bosnia and Herzegovina naturally formed one of the subjects of examination; but he had from the commencement always asserted, and made it perfectly plain, that any alteration of the status was a general European question, and could not be seriously discussed between the two Governments alone. However when I was in possession of all the documents he would easily make it all clear to me.

I said that I should be happy to bring him the papers when I received them, and that of course it was useless to discuss the question until we had the papers before us. He did not offer to show them to me yesterday, and I, therefore, saw no object in pressing the matter further. At the same time the preliminary explanations which M. Iswolsky gave me did not seem to me to be quite convincing, as, so far as I could gather, the status of Bosnia and Herzegovina had been mentioned in certain discussions in June last, and it may be that M. Iswolsky committed himself a little further than he is willing to admit. His position on the question is a little tangled and hampered by the various secret arrangements which seem to be emerging piecemeal into publicity, concluded between Russia and Austria-Hungary: but it would create a painful impression here if it were believed that

during M. Iswolsky's tenure of office, and after the Sandjak railway incident, certain *pourparlers* had taken place in respect to the incorporation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 499.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 104/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, January 4, 1909.

Tel. (No. 8.)

D. 2:15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 1.⁽¹⁾

I quite agree that concrete proposal should be made to Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t, but amount named should certainly not be less than 125 million francs. In proposing this it might be suggested verbally to Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t that if an international guarantee of a Bulgarian loan would help them and if any indication is forthcoming that this would be agreeable to them, Russia or one of us, would at once consult the other Powers.

It would I think be better to suggest the idea of a guarantee to Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t in this way rather than to confront them point blank with an offer.

It would be difficult for any Power to refuse to join in a guarantee, if this would enable Bulgaria to offer what would make peace between her and Turkey and if any Power did refuse it would be open to the other Powers, who were anxious for peace to proceed with a guarantee themselves.

Whether conversion of Bulgarian debt would relieve her budget depends I presume upon the state of the market.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 500.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 865/26/09/44.

(No. 5.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 4, 1909.

Count Mensdorff told me to-day that he had received from Sir Charles Hardinge the answer I had given respecting the proposed representations at Constantinople. He supposed there was nothing to add to it.

I replied that that was so.

I then reminded him that Turkey, or at least some of the Turks, had originally entertained the idea of imposing political conditions upon the recognition of the independence of Eastern Roumelia. The idea had also been entertained in Turkey of a very large financial compensation, a sum of ten or twenty millions sterling had been suggested, and the Commission of the Debt had rather encouraged this calculation.

I had constantly advised the Turkish Government not to stand out for that to which they were legally entitled on a strict calculation, but to confine their demands to what Bulgaria was likely to be able to pay. It was, I thought, partly as a result of what I had said that Turkey had negotiated with Bulgaria on a purely financial basis. They had even, so I understood, begun negotiations on the offer by Bulgaria of 82 million francs, an offer which I thought quite inadequate. Bulgaria had refused to increase this offer, in spite of the fact that Turkey had modified her own original ideas very considerably.

Count Mensdorff asked what news I had from Sir Fairfax Cartwright.

I told him Sir Fairfax had been much impressed by the strength of the feeling which had been created by the attacks of the Austrian press upon us. I thought these attacks most unfounded.

Count Mensdorff said they were really replies to articles in the British press, which had been widely advertised, especially in Montenegro, as evidence that we would support Serbia and Montenegro against Austria, and that the moderate counsels given by the British Government did not really represent British opinion.

He went on to say that he hoped the Austrians understood our sympathy with the Young Turks. Many of the Austrians shared this sympathy themselves. But they could not understand, as we were not Slavs, why it was that we took up the Servian and Montenegrin claims. Count Mensdorff hoped that these claims would not receive any support from us if Austria made a settlement with Turkey.

I told him that the Slav feeling in Russia had to be considered, and considerable feeling had also been aroused in Italy.

Count Mensdorff said that what Serbia and Montenegro really desired was the Sandjak.

I observed that they were not afraid of Turkey, but they were afraid of Austria.

Count Mensdorff said there was no reason for fearing Austria, who would not advance any further; the idea of her advancing to Salonica ought not to be apprehended.

I then told him that M. Milovanovitch when he was here had expressed great apprehension lest Austria should advance once more. Austria had originally occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina on the plea that they were in a state of chaos on her own border. Now that she had annexed them, she would presently find another zone of chaos on her border, and would advance again.

Count Mensdorff said there was no question of any such thing.

I replied that if Austria could find some means of allaying the apprehensions of Serbia and Montenegro in this respect, the result would no doubt be to make matters much more easy.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

[ED. NOTE.—The following private letter (from the Carnock MSS.) from Sir C. Hardinge supplements the above.

Sir C. Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

My dear Nicolson.

Foreign Office, January 4, 1909.

Many thanks for your two letters of the 30th and 31st.

It is really very unfortunate that there should be this personal animosity between Isvolsky and Aehrenthal. The situation has developed into one in which they are now trying to score off each other. Aehrenthal has, so far, had the better of the game, because he is more unscrupulous. It was a pretty strong order on his part to have published the correspondence without any previous reference to Isvolsky, and I can imagine the latter's annoyance at the announcement of the secret agreements which exist between Austria and Russia, by which the future of some of the Slav States was, in times past, surrendered to Austria.

We received last week the Austrian proposal to urge moderation upon Turkey. On Saturday Mensdorff came to see me, and I gave him our definite reply. I pointed out to him that the Turks have, so far, been much more conciliatory in negotiations with Bulgaria than the Bulgarians. for, at the outset, the Turkish Government thought of putting forward certain political conditions in connection with Eastern Roumelia, which had since been dropped. So also they had put forward very large financial claims, based on calculations made for them by the Commission of the Public Debt in Constantinople, and these too, we had reason to know, they were ready to abate. On the other hand, the Bulgarians had never advanced a shilling beyond the minimum and very inadequate compensation of Eighty-two million francs, which they had offered. The want of conciliation is therefore shown, in our opinion, on the side of Bulgaria rather than on that of Turkey. As regards the fears said to be entertained in Bulgaria of the Turkish military preparations and of the possibility of an attack, we had received no information from our representative to confirm such an impression. On the contrary, it was only on the 11th December that both the Bulgarian Minister of War and the Chief of the General Staff had declared to Colonel Napier, our Military Attaché, their absolute conviction that Turkey had no intention of fighting. This, coming from these two high Generals, confirmed our impression that Turkey was imbued with no aggressive intentions. If she had such intentions, they would receive no encouragement from us here. Consequently, His Majesty's Government do not consider that the Bulgarian circular provides sufficient cause or reason for any further representations to the

Turkish Government, who have already been advised by England on more than one occasion to exercise moderation in their demands.

On Saturday last I saw the Turkish Ambassador, and I asked him how his Government would view the question of the junction of the Kustendjil and Kumanova railways. He seemed to think that they would not raise much objection to their junction. I suggested to him that, in view of the *impasse* in which the Bulgarian negotiations now are, it might be possible to utilize this concession to obtain a fair lump sum from Bulgaria, since the Bulgarians are now in the position of requiring some such excuse to justify themselves, in the eyes of their country, in yielding on the question of the amount they have to pay. The Ambassador promised to telegraph to his Government to enquire. This may possibly be a way out. I am rather more hopeful about it, since I see that Buchanan mentions the amount of One hundred and twenty million francs as a sum which the Bulgarians might be willing to pay under certain circumstances. If we can get them to pay One hundred and twenty-five million francs, I think the Turks will have done very well.

We are waiting to hear what Isvolsky's proposals are relating to Persia. I am not very happy at the idea of the advice that Hartwig will have given, and we shall be still less happy if we hear definitely that Hartwig is to return as Minister. Of course we quite understand that he will have to go back to pack up his things; but, in view of there being so many vacancies in the Russian diplomatic service, I have hopes that he will receive an appointment elsewhere.

The King and Queen are going to Germany in the second week of February. It is to be hoped that this may have a good effect in Germany. I trust, however, that the Russians will not think for a moment that we want to improve our relations with Germany at their expense. We have no pending questions with Germany, except that of naval construction, while our whole future in Asia is bound up with the necessity of maintaining the best and most friendly relations with Russia. We cannot afford to sacrifice in any way our entente with Russia—even for the sake of a reduced naval programme. I am not authorized to suggest that you should say this to Isvolsky, as I have not seen Grey, who has been away for some time: but I am quite convinced that he is of that opinion too. Therefore if the occasion arises and you use such language, I am certain that it will be approved.

My best wishes for the New Year to you and Lady Nicolson.

Y[ou]rs ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.]

No. 501.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, January 5, 1909.

F.O. 601/26/09/44A.

D. 5:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 3.)

R. 6:30 P.M.

I have just seen Baron d'Aehrenthal on his return from audience with the Emperor. His speech of Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs was a very serious incident, and quite unexpected. Portion of speech dealing with rival claims of Russia and Austria in the Balkans he could afford to ignore, but what he could not pass over was the accusation launched by the Foreign Minister of a neighbouring State that Austria had taken advantage of occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to reduce Serb population to a state of slavery.⁽¹⁾ He said that public apology had been asked for this. He would not, however, tell me what steps would be taken in the event of apology being refused.

I asked him if resignation of Foreign Minister would be sufficient. He said no. He would expect a clear repudiation by new Servian Government of sentiments expressed by present Minister of Foreign Affairs. I asked if he thought war was imminent with Servia. He avoided giving direct reply, but said that Austria did not desire war which could bring her no glory or satisfaction, but still he could not submit passively to direct provocation launched by responsible members of Servian Government.

Baron d'Aehrenthal, who has considerable regard for present Servian Foreign Minister, considers that one of the worst signs of the present situation is the fact that

⁽¹⁾ [This refers to a speech by M. Milovanović on 2nd January. He subsequently explained publicly that the statement that Austria had "enslaved" two Serb countries was a mistranslation and that the literal rendering was "subjugated."]

this moderate man had been driven, in order to maintain his political influence, to make this extravagant speech.

The impression I got from Baron d'Aehrenthal was that his Excellency thought the moment had come when, without loss of time, the Powers should use their utmost efforts to prevent further development of Chauvinistic madness in Servia.

MINUTE.

It is for Russia to approach us if she wishes anything done at Belgrade—we must wait.

E. G.

No. 502.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 718/26/09/44.

(No. 4.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 6, 1909.

The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador called on the 2nd instant, and Sir C. Hardinge then communicated to him my reply to the Memorandum⁽¹⁾ from the Austro-Hungarian Government which had been left by Count Széchenyi on the 29th ultimo.⁽¹⁾

He told Count Mensdorff that, when Count Széchenyi had brought the memorandum in question, I had not received the Bulgarian circular note, which had since been forwarded to me, and had received my careful consideration, together with Baron Aehrenthal's memorandum.

He was now authorized to tell His Excellency that, as a matter of fact, we had repeatedly urged moderation on Turkey, and had more than once recommended Bulgaria to come to terms with her; but the Bulgarian Government had throughout assumed an irreconcilable attitude. It was quite true that, at the commencement of the negotiations, Turkey appeared to be contemplating certain political conditions respecting Eastern Roumelia, but these, according to our information, had since been dropped in her negotiations with Bulgaria. The Turkish Government had also originally mentioned a large sum, which received some countenance from calculations made by the Commission of the Ottoman Public Debt; but it was understood that the Turkish Government had shown a disposition to abate this extreme demand. The position, in our opinion, was, therefore, that Turkey had shown a more conciliatory spirit so far than Bulgaria, since the latter had hitherto refused to advance at all beyond her first minimum, and, in our opinion inadequate, offer of Eighty-two million Francs. Under these circumstances, although His Majesty's Government were sincerely desirous of doing all in their power to encourage a settlement of the questions pending between Bulgaria and Turkey, they considered that, in view of the moderating advice which they had already given to Turkey, there was no reason why they should avail themselves of the opportunity of the Bulgarian circular note to make renewed representations to her.

As regarded the fears expressed in the Bulgarian circular as to the military preparations and intentions of Turkey, Sir C. Hardinge told Count Mensdorff that we had received no information from Sofia to confirm such fears. We had every reason to believe that the Turks harboured no aggressive designs against Bulgaria, and that, although they are now very much stronger in Europe than they were six months ago, the fact of their strength was, in our opinion, an additional guarantee of peace, since it might make the Bulgarians reflect before they ventured on attacking them. If the Turks entertained any such aggressive designs against Bulgaria, they would receive no sympathy or encouragement here. As a matter of fact, in spite of what was stated in the Bulgarian circular, Sir C. Hardinge said that he might mention that we had received a despatch from Sofia containing the record of a conversation which our Military Attaché had had with the Minister of War and

(1) [Not reproduced.]

the Chief of the General Staff on December 11th.⁽²⁾ and both these Generals had on that occasion stated to the Military Attaché their conviction that Turkey did not intend to fight. This statement of the two Generals was an additional confirmation of our impressions.

Count Mensdorff expressed his thanks for the communication, which he said he would telegraph to Baron Aehrenthal.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

(²) [Not reproduced.]

No. 503.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 1062/26/09/44A.

(No. 2.)

Vienna, D. January 6, 1909.

Sir,

R. January 9, 1909.

The Neue Freie Presse of this morning publishes a remarkable article, evidently inspired from German sources, laying out in a very full manner the grievances of Austria-Hungary against Great Britain. It contains the usual amount of false statements with regard to British intrigues with the additional extraordinary announcement that we are responsible for the incorrect translation of Monsieur Milovanovich's speech which has been disseminated throughout the Press of Europe.

The article is so worthy of being carefully studied as a sample of the campaign which is being carried on against Great Britain in this country, evidently at the instigation of Germany, that I have the honour to enclose herewith a full Précis of the same.

It seems to me that at Berlin so much alarm exists lest Great Britain should successfully endeavour to detach Austria-Hungary from the Triple Alliance that German Diplomacy thinks it necessary to make use of every means, fair or foul, to create an Anti-British current of public opinion in this country.

The object of the Article in question is clear enough and may be summed up by quoting one passage from it—

“England's object is to humiliate us, by showing through a striking example that no Nation can remain faithful to the German Empire without hurt to herself. That is the governing sentiment which actuates present British policy and the only motive power which now sets all her diplomacy at work.”

I have also the honour to enclose herein a copy of the Article in its original German and I venture to suggest that should Count Mensdorff again call attention to the unfriendly attitude of our press, this mischievous attack upon Great Britain by a leading Vienna paper should be shown to His Excellency.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

Enclosure in No. 503.

Précis of Article in the “Neue Freie Presse” of January 6, 1909.

He never said it.⁽¹⁾ That was certainly what we all expected, and once more have the Parliamentary reporters by their wonderful capacity for suiting their hearing to diplomatic requirements preserved the peace.

The Servian incident is fizzling out. But we are still asking, who it is that is at the back of the audacious statements which the Servian Ministers' speeches still contain even after the actual abusive sentences have been denied. The whole welfare

(¹) [M. Milovanović, v. *supra*, p. 550, No. 501, note.]

of Europe is at the mercy of a wicked lie. While statesmen are giving persistent assurances that they desire a policy of peace, Belgrade is being inflamed. Provocation by a State which can be downed by a single blow can only be explained by secret suggestion on the part of our enemies. Are the European nations prepared to tolerate any longer the economic depression, or the increasing number of hungry and unemployed? Why should the labouring classes of every country endure this outrage any longer? Simply because occupation has been transformed into annexation! That is the reason why the poor are to become poorer and the hungry hungrier. The statistics of the unemployed in England have reached an appalling figure. Even the State has been compelled to help and an extensive system of private charity has had at least to save from starvation these wretched beings whom the crisis has thrown on the streets. Yet nothing has increased the crowds of miserable people who are lurking shelterless under the bridges of London during this terribly cold winter but England's policy. For some years it has impregnated the world with a feeling of unrest. Now it embraces the Continent with its *Ententes* and puts itself at the head of the opponents of the Dual Monarchy when under the stress of the change in Turkey and the intrigues of a hostile dynasty in Belgrade she has been obliged to regulate her position in Bosnia. How many of the 40 million inhabitants of the United Kingdom ever knew what was meant by occupation and annexation? They can be counted by the thousand. Not a single British interest has been affected and general public feeling is utterly indifferent. Now perhaps the unemployed have learnt a little more about the annexation. The annexation, or rather what the bellicose English and a part of the English press have turned it into, is a scourge which scatters hunger right and left in the English manufacturing towns: it is a beast of prey which snatches the scanty mouthfuls of bread from the mouths of the starving. If only the British nation, which counts veracity among its traditions, could be better informed as to how cruel a wrong has been inflicted on it! English politicians, responsible and irresponsible, are persistently trifling with a war on account of Bosnia and Herzegovina, names barely known among the masses. A vast evil has fallen on Europe in consequence of the annexation. And those who desire it have the hypocrisy to assure us of their love of peace and to prove to us daily how false a heart can be when piety is merely lip-service.

The new British Ambassador in Vienna intended at his reception by the Emperor Francis Joseph to hand a Memorandum in which his Government would justify itself against the charge of harbouring hostile feelings against the Dual Monarchy. A sincere and clear defence of this nature is certainly needed by the whole Monarchy which still desires that the traditions of friendship which have been fostered for centuries in Austria should be revived in England. Sincerity is the best preliminary to a return to this state of feelings which is certainly not dead, but is exceedingly obscured by the shadow thrown by British policy. But complete sincerity compels us to say that all parties in the Monarchy, which politically is so divided, are absolutely united in one opinion, and that is the conviction that all the harm that has been done us in the world since the day of the annexation comes from England who has partly provoked it, partly given it secret encouragement and partly even inflicted it herself. The official courtesies on which we would gladly have fastened remain powerless before the impression made by the reports from every land in the Balkans. We are constantly hearing that England is at the bottom of all the ill feeling, that she is encouraging the boycott, that she is blocking the negotiations and that she is aggravating the mistrust of us. What is the reason of it? England asserts that she is morally indignant at our violation of a Treaty. We congratulate the English people on a moral policy which is horrified when another's property is touched and has quite departed from the principles which allowed Egypt to be taken from the Sultan and invited the French to undertake the peaceful penetration of Morocco. Once England left the Jezebels who laid hands on their neighbour's vineyard to the vengeance of Heaven and had no wish to draw the sword of earthly righteousness against criminals who did not touch her interests. Austria-Hungary enjoys the honour

of being perhaps the first State to feel the consequences of England's newly whetted moral appetite and England desires to humble her because the annexation has brought high moral sentiments into play.

In what manner, as a matter of fact, does the conversion of occupation into annexation particularly affect England? England declares that it constitutes an infringement of the Treaty of Berlin. Such infractions have already been of frequent occurrence, and England herself, when the most important infringement was made, and Eastern Roumelia was handed over to Bulgaria, sent it her blessing. Was the forcible separation of Egypt, the most painful loss sustained by the Sultan of Turkey, foreseen in the Treaty of Berlin? Why should this hurricane of morality suddenly be let loose upon us? A short time ago we were reproached with the fact that the annexation of the Provinces was calculated to expose the new Turkish Constitution to serious dangers. Here again no such thing has happened. The Turkish Parliament is in an exceptionally strong position. The hopes of its Deputies are all centred on the Sultan. Nowhere is there the smallest indication that annexation has undermined the power of the Constitution. That it is the wish of Austria-Hungary to strengthen the Constitution is evinced by her retrocession to Turkey of important rights of sovereignty, by her readiness to increase Turkish revenues by a higher Customs Tariff, and to come to an agreement with the Porte at considerable sacrifice. In spite of this there is no abatement of English animosity. Only here and there the fact becomes suddenly apparent that England may one day greatly regret having estranged for a long time to come a tried friend, a comrade in arms on many a battlefield, and an ally who, especially at the Congress of Berlin and during the last years of Queen Victoria's reign, always stood by her side.

The action of England has been such as to induce throughout the entire Austro-Hungarian Monarchy the popular belief that she is inciting and supporting every act of hostility that may be directed against us.⁽²⁾ What wisdom can there be in estranging an Empire with fifty millions of inhabitants? Of two things one: either England desires this estrangement or she does not. If she does not desire it, English policy must have gone seriously astray to excite such general deception and disappointment among a nation whose military force of two million soldiers is a factor to be very seriously reckoned with. But if England does as a fact desire this estrangement, then we stand in the presence of the first example in history of an Empire, beneath a cloak of morality, stirring up a conflagration from which it hopes, in its greed, to derive individual advantages. It is for the sake of political side issues, on account of her dangerous dallying with anti-German tendencies in Russia, and her deep resentment at the loyalty of our Treaty relations with Germany, that England is endangering the peace of our Monarchy. England's action cannot find justification in the fact that she is struggling for the maintenance of her own vital interests. No:—England's object is to humiliate us by showing through a striking example that no nation can remain faithful to the German Empire without hurt to herself. That is the governing sentiment which actuates present British policy and the only motive power which now sets all her diplomacy at work. But we in this Empire ask ourselves what justification there can be in conjuring up the spectre of international bloodshed merely because Austria-Hungary remains true to her Treaty relations with Germany? It is noticeable too that Herr Bassermann, the leader of the National Liberals in the German Reichstag, has expressed the opinion that a veritable drive has been made against this Empire. Then we have the Minister of a State whose military importance, it can safely be said, is inconsiderable beside our own, proclaiming war against our Monarchy with a calmness amounting almost to equanimity; if such an utterance is not midsummer madness, something or somebody must lie concealed behind it. Such is the public mistrust of England in this country, that it is generally believed that this, too, is England's work.

Russia it is evident does not desire war; France, through her peaceable dispositions and her political forbearance during the recent crisis has enhanced her reputation

⁽²⁾ [*cp. infra*, p. 830, *App. V.*]

among the Powers. Who can it then be who instils the poison into the Servian Minister's ears, lays constant snares for us in Constantinople, and incites to boycottage of our goods? If a referendum on the subject could be taken throughout our Monarchy, the universal answer would be :—England!

The new British Ambassador will have a particularly difficult and arduous task in desPELLing [*sic*] these impressions which have sunk so deep into popular imagination. England's policy is a source of grief to all who think with gratitude of what that great nation has taught us and how she has always fostered the spirit of freedom. Her present policy constitutes a disillusionment among the bitterest and most painful our public life has ever sustained; we have lost not only a friend, but a teacher and an adviser.

No. 504.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 1254/26/09/44A.

(No. 3.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. January 6, 1909.

R. January 11, 1909.

With reference to my telegram No. 3 of the 5th instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that I saw Baron von Aehrenthal yesterday afternoon on his return from his audience with the Emperor, and I found His Excellency very much occupied with the incident which has been created by the speech delivered in the Skupshtina the other day by Monsieur Milovanovitch, the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs. If the Servian Minister had merely indulged in theoretical speculations on the merits or demerits of Russian or Austro-Hungarian influence in the Balkans, His Excellency would have passed the matter over with indifference; but what he could not ignore was the accusation launched by a responsible Minister of a neighbouring State that Austria-Hungary had misused the mission intrusted to her at the Berlin Conference by the Signatory Powers of civilising Bosnia and Herzegovina, and had reduced the Serb inhabitants of these two Provinces to a state little better than that of slavery. This was a direct provocation to Austria-Hungary, the throwing down of a gauntlet which her dignity compelled her to pick up. I attempted to obtain from Baron von Aehrenthal some indication of the course he proposed to pursue towards Servia, but I could obtain nothing very definite from him. I enquired whether the resignation of Monsieur Milovanowitch would satisfy Austria-Hungary and close the incident. I understood from His Excellency that that would not be considered as offering sufficient satisfaction to this country; nothing was easier than to shuffle the portfolios in Servia from one Minister to another, but the doing so would produce little change in the situation. The political atmosphere which prevailed at Belgrade was essentially a wrong one. If Monsieur Milovanovitch resigned and Monsieur Paschitch returned to power in his place, no improvement in the relations between this country and Servia would result from it. *En passant*, Baron von Aehrenthal said that the influence of the regicides had corrupted the political life in Servia to a lamentable extent, and he added that Monsieur Paschitch quite recently plotted the assassination of the Prince of Montenegro—in short, Austria-Hungary had to deal with a nest of bandits at her doors. I gathered from what Baron von Aehrenthal said that he would probably demand a public repudiation by the next Servian Ministry of the political views reported as having been expressed by Monsieur Milovanovitch in the Skupshtina. He was evidently of opinion that without something of the kind being done it would be difficult for Austria-Hungary to continue to have diplomatic relations with Servia.

On my asking him whether he thought that an armed conflict was likely to be the result of the present incident, Baron von Aehrenthal said that he could not predict what might happen. He did not wish for war; in fact, Austria-Hungary was perfectly well aware that no glory and no satisfaction could be obtained from fighting Servia. I did my best to point out to him the great danger which would

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 550–1, No. 501.]

arise for Austria-Hungary if she attacked Serbia, or even if she were drawn into a conflict by direct provocations from the latter country. The world, I said, would always be inclined to look upon Austria-Hungary as being desirous of extending her dominions, and that she would find it easier to cross the frontiers and to occupy Belgrade than to recross the same with honour to herself at the close of a struggle. I advised Baron von Aehrenthal to show the greatest moderation in the present crisis, but he replied to me that what was wanted at this moment was that counsels of moderation should prevail at Belgrade. I think that he wished to convey to me a hope that the Great Powers should without loss of time make use of their influence at Belgrade to prevent any further outbreak of mad chauvinism in Serbia, for should it be allowed to spread much further, an opening of hostilities might be forced upon Austria-Hungary at any moment.

Baron von Aehrenthal laid great stress on the anarchical spirit which was rapidly developing in Serbia, and as an example of the same he told me that he had received reports that in the event of war breaking out between the two countries, there were parties in Serbia who advocated the use of explosive bombs in Vienna against high personages as an act of vengeance and despair at the invasion of their country by Austria-Hungary.

Speaking of Monsieur Milovanovitch, Baron von Aehrenthal said to me that he had a very high regard for that gentleman personally, and that he considered him to be one of the most moderate and reasonable of Servian politicians. The sudden outburst of virulence against Austria-Hungary in which he indulged in his speech was one of the worst signs of the demoralisation which now reigned at Belgrade, for Baron von Aehrenthal was convinced that Monsieur Milovanovitch had only made this speech because he felt that unless he made it he would lose all influence over his political followers. This showed the necessity for Austria-Hungary to demand solid guarantees from any new Servian Government which might now be formed to the effect that they abandoned all exaggerated chauvinistic pretensions. Without the obtaining of some guarantee of this kind, he evidently thought it would be difficult to maintain peace with Austria-Hungary's little neighbour.

I took the opportunity of enquiring of Baron von Aehrenthal whether he did not think that a slight *détente* had recently come over the international situation. He was of opinion that it had and he seemed pleased that His Majesty's Government had accepted the Austro-Hungarian proposal that the Powers should enter into a preliminary exchange of views with each other with regard to the disputed points of the programme of the Conference. In alluding to Monsieur Isvolsky's speech to the Duma, he said it was good so far as it went, but he showed no great enthusiasm for it; in fact, he repeated to me twice: "the speech has come too late; if Monsieur Isvolsky had delivered it at the end of October, the international situation would be now far better than it actually is. It is no easy matter to put right the mischief which has already been done."

I then turned to the Turkish negotiations, and I asked Baron von Aehrenthal whether there was any prospect of their coming to a satisfactory conclusion. He replied that Austria-Hungary could not allow the negotiations to go on for ever unless there seemed a possibility of their leading to something definite, and he added that in his opinion a point would be reached in about ten days' time when the negotiations must be on a fair way to a satisfactory conclusion, or be broken off. His Excellency made but slight reference to the boycott and he seemed to think that Austria-Hungary in waving aside any opposition on her part to the raising of the customs duties in Turkey, had shown her good-will towards that Power and had made a valuable concession to her. I pointed out that in my opinion the only way to bring these negotiations to a rapid termination would be for Austria-Hungary to offer a financial indemnity to the Porte as compensation for the injury done to her through the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. He recognised that to do so would certainly facilitate the negotiations, but he would not commit himself to a definite statement that Austria-Hungary would or would not follow that course.

In talking of the negotiations between Turkey and Bulgaria he expressed himself as hopeful that they would soon be renewed with a better prospect of success. According to him Bulgaria should pay liberally for her expropriation of the Orient Railway Line, and he seemed also to approve of a fair indemnity being paid to Turkey for the Roumelian Tribute, but he did not think it was possible to ask Bulgaria to capitalise the Bulgarian Tribute and to take over an equivalent amount of the Turkish Debt. He thought it was no use to ask for the impossible, and the state of Bulgarian finances did not admit of that country assuming so heavy a burden. He added that he had advised Turkey to act in a moderate spirit as Austria-Hungary was most desirous that all Balkan questions should be rapidly and peacefully solved. On my observing that it was perhaps more necessary to counsel moderation at Sophia, Baron von Aehrenthal laughed and said that it was perhaps well to counsel moderation at Sophia as well as at Constantinople.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 505.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Cartwright,

Vienna, January 6, 1909.

As Mensdorff was speaking about the harm done by our Press, I told him what Baron d'Aehrenthal had said about Noel Buxton. I thought the accusation was absurd, but if any information was forthcoming which proved it to be true I would either stop the proceedings in question, or at least expose them.

Mensdorff told me that one thing which was an object of suspicion in Austria, though he knew it was not true, was that we were siding against Austria because she was a friend of Germany.

I said this also was quite absurd. As a matter of fact, I had carefully abstained from any attempt on any occasion to make mischief between Austria and Germany. Had I ever attempted to do that, we should have been exposed to the charge of attempting to isolate Germany: a charge which was often made, but for which there was no justification. The balance of power in Europe was preserved by the present grouping, and I should not think of wishing to disturb it.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

No. 506.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 911/26/09/44A.

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Paris, D. January 7, 1909.

R. January 8, 1909.

. . . . (¹) M. Cambon was, he told me, so impressed with the necessity for an arrangement without delay between Austria and Turkey that he had called on M. Pichon and had recommended that he should obtain through the Turkish Ambassador a declaration from the Porte that it would accept monetary compensation from Austria and that the French Government should then get the Russian, British and Italian Governments to join with them in strongly urging Baron d'Aehrenthal to make a suitable offer to Turkey. He felt sure that Germany would be glad to see pressure put on Baron d'Aehrenthal and would support such advice. If some such steps were not taken, and very soon, matters would get worse and worse.

(¹) [The earlier part of this despatch details M. Paul Cambon's views on the Balkan situation, and is omitted from considerations of space.]

Austria would get more and more irritated by the boycott, some deplorable incident might occur in the annexed Provinces through the incursion of Servian or Montenegrin bands, or there might be an insurrection, or Austria might be forced to take some action against Servia; for though it appeared that M. Milovanovitch had explained away some of his recent speech, and according to the Press, those explanations had been accepted by the Austrian Government, some fresh case might arise between the two countries and if once blows were exchanged there was no telling what they might lead to. Baron d'Aehrenthal appeared to rely on Russia not being in a state to go to war. She certainly was not fit to embark in a war but Slav feeling might force the Russian Government into a position when war would be difficult if not impossible to avoid, and it should be the object of France, England and Italy and also of Germany, who in her own interests could not desire war, to do their utmost, and that without delay, to prevent matters drifting into a more critical condition.

I asked M. Cambon whether he thought that Baron d'Aehrenthal, who was credited with being intractable, would be likely to listen to such advice as he had recommended. His reply was that though a policy of personal vanity such as was the case in the present instance generally failed, and it was no doubt difficult to obtain concessions from the individual even when failure was in prospect, Austria could hardly refuse to accede to representations on a subject which did not concern its national honour if the advice were urged by four or five Powers. He thought that at all events the attempt ought to be made.

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

MINUTE.

I believe the position to be that Baron d'Aehrenthal would offer pecuniary compensation in some form, but Hungary has blocked the way. I believe also that the Porte would accept it. If the Young Turks made difficulties about accepting we could express our opinion that it should be accepted. We cannot overcome Baron d'Aehrenthal's reluctance to offer; any initiative in this direction from us would in the present state of Austrian feeling increase Austria's obstinacy, but if Sir C. Hardinge has opportunity in conversation with M. Cambon he might let him know that if Austria offers a reasonable sum we shall work for its acceptance. It must be remembered in all we say that it is necessary to avoid the impression that we are working for a settlement between Austria and Turkey to the prejudice of Slav interests; but the situation is getting so ominous that in the interests of peace whatever settlement first appears practicable should be encouraged.

E. G.

No. 507.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 1210/26/09/44A.

(No. 8.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. January 7, 1909.

R. January 11, 1909.

A report appeared in the "Berliner Tageblatt" of yesterday morning that Count Forgach, the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Belgrade, had been instructed to make representations to Monsieur Milovanovitch on the subject of the speech which he had delivered in the Skuptchina on the 2nd instant and to enquire whether the version which had been telegraphed to Vienna were correct.⁽¹⁾ If so the Austro-Hungarian Government required a suitable apology to be made; while it was intimated that an answer was expected in the course of the following day.

Being unable to leave the house I sent a verbal message to Herr von Schoen, asking him to be good enough to let me have his impressions with regard to the situation which appeared to me to be grave. Herr von Schoen replied that he agreed with me that the position of affairs was critical and evidently might lead to a catastrophe. For his own part he hoped that the incident would pass over, and

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 550, No. 501, note.]

that it might even do good by clearing the air. After explanations were given, as they probably would be, relations between Belgrade and Vienna would no doubt be a little smoother than they had been. As I knew, he had all along been rather optimistic, though he recognized that for the moment negotiations between Austria and Turkey were not making much progress. He had learnt however that the Austrian Ambassador had spoken afresh to Tewfik Pasha about the boycott and that Tewfik who was a reasonable man appeared to understand that the matter was becoming serious.

In his own opinion the really dangerous question was the position of affairs as between Austria and Russia. In addition to other differences there was bitter personal rivalry between Monsieur Isvolski and Baron d'Aehrenthal. The latter had been on the best of terms with Count Lamsdorff and the former Government in Russia: he disliked and despised the liberal régime which had succeeded it. On the other side Monsieur Isvolski had declared that Baron d'Aehrenthal was an impossible person and that nothing could be done as long as he was in control of affairs. Herr von Schoen added that he himself, after seeing Baron d'Aehrenthal had been under the impression that the annexation would not be carried out for some little time, perhaps for a year, but that Monsieur Isvolski had been under no misapprehension and had told him in the course of September that he knew from Baron d'Aehrenthal that measures were going to be taken at once. He, Herr von Schoen, had at once asked what the Russian Government proposed to do and Monsieur Isvolski had replied that at first they had been disposed to treat the matter as a *casus belli*, but that on reflection it had appeared desirable to negotiate. Monsieur Isvolski had, further, complained of the indiscreet revelations made by Baron d'Aehrenthal. But the agreement made in 1897 between Austria and Russia was public property.

In reply to a question as to whether he knew whether there were any engagements on the part of Russia anterior to 1897, Herr von Schoen said that he did not know. He was convinced that Baron d'Aehrenthal had acted in good faith in thinking that he was assured of the support of Russia but he had not felt himself in a position to ask point blank on what grounds that conviction was based. He did not know if engagements had been made in 1884 or 1887, nor did he remember that in 1882 negotiations (to which an allusion is made in Prince Hohenlohe's memoirs) had taken place on the renewal of the "Dreikaiserbund."

Monsieur Pansa, the Italian Ambassador, informed me a few days ago that his Government had pressed the French Government to say whether, in any *pourparlers* that might take place between the different Cabinets as a preliminary to the assembly of a conference, France would be disposed to play the part of intermediary in collecting the opinions expressed, eliminating proposals which were unacceptable and finding formulas on which agreement could be hoped for. Monsieur Pichon was understood to have pointed out in reply that France had undertaken such a task in the case of Bulgaria and Turkey because she had been asked by one of the parties to do so. No such request had so far been addressed to her in the present case. If it were, she would undoubtedly not come to a decision without consulting both Russia and Great Britain.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 508.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Vienna, January 7, 1909.

Thanks for your letter in which you inform me of the language you used to Count Mensdorff with regard to the grievances of Great Britain against the Austrian

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

press.⁽²⁾ I fear, however, that Count Mensdorff is too much afraid of Baron von Aehrenthal to give him a full report of what you may have said to him. From all I hear Aehrenthal is incensed against us and his fury is fanned with all their might by the Germans. In no country is the Press Bureau so thoroughly organised as here, and in no country has the Government such power to influence the press in any direction. Therefore, when day by day we see article after article full of calumnies against England, we can only come to the conclusion that the Government here is desirous of creating an anti-British feeling in the country, and this feeling once created, it will be very difficult for His Majesty's Government to work in a friendly manner with that of Austria-Hungary. The worst insinuations against Great Britain appear in the German newspapers, and these are immediately reproduced in the Austrian press, whereas, if anything favourable appears about us, it is carefully excluded from the Austro-Hungarian newspapers. A curious case of the hostility of the Austro-Hungarian Government to ourselves is the so-called incident which has been reported throughout the press of Europe as having occurred between myself and Baron von Aehrenthal. The truth of the matter was, as you know, that His Majesty's Government desired to make use of my audience with the Emperor to convey to the Austrian people through the press, with the approval of Aehrenthal, a declaration of our friendly sentiments towards their country. If Aehrenthal's feelings were really friendly to us, he would have availed himself of the proposed "communiqué" which I showed him, and he might have suggested that it should be given to the press as embodying the substance of what I had said personally to him at our first interview. This might have helped to calm the hostility of public opinion against us here. But it was the very thing which Aehrenthal did not wish to happen, and therefore every false report as to my intentions was allowed to appear in the press without official contradiction.

To me, personally, Aehrenthal is very civil, and he takes care not to accuse in my presence the British Government of harbouring hostile feelings against Austria-Hungary, but he frequently alludes in a vague manner to what I may term the "mauvais vouloir" of His Majesty's Government in not using their utmost influence to stop the boycott, and so on. To others he is more outspoken, and Sir Thomas Barclay who saw him yesterday received Baron von Aehrenthal's full fury against England. He launched out against us in the terms of the article which appeared in the "Neue Freie Presse" yesterday, a translation of which I sent home in my despatch No. 2 of the 6th instant.⁽³⁾ This article, which I have every reason to believe is inspired, is worthy of being carefully read. Two or three days ago, Friedjung, the Austrian historian who is a great personal friend of the Baron, spoke in the exact sense of the article in question to a person who reported it to me, showing that the writer of the article had been in close contact with Aehrenthal and probably with Friedjung.

During the last few days the attacks on England are based on our supposed support of Serbia. We are accused of supplying arms to the Servians; we are providing the funds for carrying on the anti-Austrian propaganda in the Balkan States; but the most mischievous accusation which is repeated everywhere is that Great Britain has held out promises to the Servian Government of something more than moral support, and that you have advised Serbia not to go to war until provoked, which it is said is interpreted in Belgrade to mean that in your opinion provocation will come from Austria-Hungary, and that therefore you are secretly putting the sword into the hands of the Servians. All this makes it very difficult to improve the present unsatisfactory relations between our Government and this, and the only policy which it seems to me we ought to pursue is to act with straightforwardness in the interests of peace, indifferent as to what may be said with regard to our motives, and to counsel moderation in Serbia and Montenegro. All the trouble

(²) [This seems to be the interview reported on pp. 548-9, No. 500, on January 4. The private letter reporting the language has not been found.]

(³) [*v. supra*, pp. 552-5, No. 503, *encl.*]

really comes from Berlin where they will do everything in their power to prevent public opinion here from appreciating our friendly dispositions towards the Austro-Hungarian nation.

Count Theodore Zichy called on me the other day and told me some things worth repeating. He was at the head of the Hungarian Delegation early in October when Baron von Aehrenthal announced to them the annexation of the two Provinces. Five or six days before that date the Count was in Vienna, and Aehrenthal sent a message to him to say that he would like to see the draft of his proposed speech. Zichy, however, replied that it was not ready as yet but that he would show it to him at Budapest on the eve of the meeting of the Delegations. When Baron von Aehrenthal received the drafted speech, he told Zichy that he must make an allusion to Bosnia in it. The Count replied that he could not do so unless he was informed of the terms of the Imperial speech. It was then that Aehrenthal announced to him that on the following day the annexation would be proclaimed. . . .⁽⁴⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX F. CARTWRIGHT.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

M. d'Aehrenthal's language about England and his conduct towards us savours of "The Bull in the China Shop" style!

E. R.

⁽⁴⁾ [The rest of this letter gives further details as to Count Zichy's views.]

No. 509.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodā.

F.O. 44131/31738/08/44A.

(No. 6.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 8, 1909.

I have received Y[our] E[xcellency's] desp[atch] No. 195, Conf[idential] of the 15th inst[ant]⁽¹⁾ recording your first interview with the Italian Min[ister] for F[oreign] A[ffairs] and I approve the language which you used on that occasion. Your observations concerning the Cretan question were particularly well-timed.

Should M. Tittoni recur to the question what attitude H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will adopt in case of an attack by Austria on Turkey, you might point out that since he spoke the situation seems to have changed for the better, the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t having waived the condition that the boycott of Austrian goods must cease before negotiations could be resumed, and those negotiations being now in progress. The Prince of Montenegro has given an assurance that he will await the meeting of the European Conference, and H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t have taken note of that assurance and expressed their approval of the course which H[is] R[oyal] H[ighness] contemplates as the best which he can pursue in the interests of his country.

Nevertheless, there is still, no doubt, cause for considerable anxiety, and if, as M. Tittoni seems to fear, a conflict were to take place between Austria and Turkey it would I think be a very rash assumption to suppose that it would be limited, as far as continental nations are concerned, to Austria and Turkey alone.

I do not doubt the desire of the Governments of all the Great Powers to avoid war, but recent events have made it clear that account must be taken of public feeling as well as of the plans of Governments. No one can foretell to what dangerous degree the strength of feeling which has been evoked by the operations of diplomacy would be intensified by an outbreak of war between any two Powers in Europe at this moment. No Gov[ernmen]t can foresee the limits of the action which it might be forced to take in such an event. I think that Baron

d'Aehrenthal must by this time be aware to some extent of these risks and it is therefore very unlikely that he means to provoke a war.

I cannot say beforehand what action H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would take in a contingency which seems improbable, but which if it occurred, would have most far-reaching consequences.

The policy of support to the new Turkish régime announced by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in public speeches is fully indorsed by public opinion here and in giving effect to it Great Britain welcomes the assistance of all the Powers who share her views.

It is the special desire of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to act in concert with Italy whenever possible, as has been the case in Egypt, Somaliland, Abyssinia and Crete.

With regard to this latter question, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] feel that it must be treated with the greatest delicacy and with the utmost regard for Turkish susceptibility. We are pledged to consult the Porte before coming to any decision, and to ignore Turkish feeling in the matter would be to run the risk of exasperating Turkish opinion and impeding a general pacific settlement.

I am, &c.

E. GREY.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 510.

Sir G. Louther to Sir Edward Grey.

Constantinople, January 11, 1909.

F.O. 1459/26/09/44.

D. 1 P.M.

Tel. (No. 7.)

R. 2.20 P.M.

Austrian Ambassador has made following proposal to the Porte:—

- (1) Renunciation of her rights in Sandjak under Treaty of Berlin.
- (2) Proposal of a previous agreement regarding conclusion of a treaty of commerce and increase of custom duties thus taking the initiative in a matter of vital economic importance to the new regime.
- (3) Offer of payment of two and a half million Turkish pounds as a compensation for Turkish crown lands in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Germany has already verbally informed the Porte of her adhesion to No. (2) in principle. Grand Vizier is very anxious to know whether H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] will likewise agree.

Grand Vizier tells me that Austrian Ambassador gave him to understand that efforts were being made to find a solatium for Serbia and Montenegro.

Sent to Vienna.

No. 511.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 1008/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, January 11, 1909.

Tel. (No. 26.)

D. 1.25 P.M.

Sir G. Buchanan's tel[egram] No. 2 and Sir F. Bertie's tel[egram] No. 3.

Ascertain whether, in view of recent communication made to British, French and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts by Bulgarian Agent in Paris, M. Isvolsky is still of opinion that representation at Sofia should be deferred.

It seems that the moment has arrived when the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t should be told by the British, French, Russian and possibly Italian R[epresentatives] at Sofia that, after careful consideration, the Gov[ernmen]ts are of opinion that a lump sum of 125 million francs should be paid to Turkey as equitable compensation for the moral and material losses caused by the declaration of Bulgarian independence. Until Bulgaria expresses her readiness to agree to compensation on this basis it would appear to be useless for the Bulgarian Delegates to reopen negotiations at Const[antino]ple. The Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t might further be told that in the event of their agreeing to make an offer of 125 million francs to Turkey, the four Gov[ernmen]ts would use all their influence to obtain its acceptance, and on conclusion of the negotiations with Turkey would take immediate steps with the other Powers to obtain the recognition of Bulgarian independence and the consent of Turkey to the junction of the railways between Kumanova and Kustendil.

Inquire whether M. Tsvolsky concurs in these views and would be disposed to put them before the French and Italian Gov[ernmen]ts.

Repeated to Paris (No. 12), Rome (No. 11), Sofia (No. 6).

[ED. NOTE.—Sir G. Buchanan's telegram No. 2 of January 6, 1909, D. 8.20 P.M., R. 9 P.M., reported that the Bulgarian Council of Ministers had "decided to inform Porte that Bulgaria will resume negotiations on the understanding that Turkey's material interests are to form basis for conversation." On the 8th Sir F. Bertie telegraphed from Paris (No. 3 of January 8, D. 7.50 P.M., R. 9.30 P.M.), that the Bulgarian representative had made a written communication to him refusing to "negotiate on a financial basis" and begging "England, France, and Russia to urge Porte to negotiate, not on a purely pecuniary basis, but on the good results which would issue from an *entente* with Bulgaria."]

No. 512.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, January 11, 1909.

F.O. 1486/26/09/44A.

D. 6.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 12.) Confidential.

R. 8 P.M.

My interview with Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day reported in my telegram No. 11.⁽¹⁾

I found his Excellency more cheerful than I have as yet seen him, and he gave me the impression of having in his mind the possibility of a pacific solution of other questions than the Turkish one.

He has evidently had great difficulty in obtaining consent of Hungary to payment of indemnity. This was only secured a few days ago.

I think that he attached great importance to obtaining approval of His Majesty's Government to course he has now taken. He said to me that the present moment was a very critical one, and if Turkey did not accept the present offer the European international situation might be greatly affected thereby.

He expressed himself with regard to England in most friendly terms, and noted with satisfaction the better tone of the English press during last week, especially as regards Serbia, and he went so far as to regret and wash his hands of recent outbursts of Anglophobia in Austrian papers.

MINUTE.

Baron d'Aehrenthal let his hands go unwashed for a long time.

E. G.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 513.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, January 13, 1909.

F.O. 1781/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 13.) Most Confidential.

R. 10 P.M.

Turco-Bulgarian negotiations.

Turkish Ambassador spoke to me to-day of difficulty of arriving at arrangement with Bulgaria on purely financial basis. On my asking whether Bulgaria had anything else to offer to Turkey in return for recognition of independence, he replied, after much hesitation, that in his opinion Turkish Government would attach great value to conclusion of offensive and defensive alliance with Bulgaria. If this were offered, he thought, financial question would be easier to settle.

No. 514.

Summary of Proceedings in the Duma and Events in Russia for the Fortnight ending January 14, 1909.

(Enclosure in Despatch No. 36 from Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey,
D. January 14, 1909, R. January 18, 1909.)

F.O. 2214/286/09/38.

Extract.

. . . . The Near East continues to preoccupy the Russian Press. The "Novoe Vremya" indignantly repudiates the suggestion of the Bulgarians that Russia is hostile to them; Russia only opposes their Austrophil sentiments in the name of Slavdom. The "Vecher" gives a most gloomy picture of the situation and says a solution must and can only be found by submitting all the questions at issue to the *non-interested* Powers. With regard to M. Milovanovitch's speech, the "Novoe Vremya" hopes that the latter fully grasps the true significance of the *volte-face* which Russia has made by renouncing territorial compensation in the Balkans; the "Slovo" fears the worst from the Austrian demand for explanations at Belgrade, and says that Serbia is practically isolated owing to the pitiful negative rôle of Russia. The "Bourse Gazette" remarks that there is nothing, even in the distorted version of the speech published in Vienna, which could be construed as an insult to Austria, but its tone was not friendly, nor was there any reason why it should be. The "Russkie Vedomosti" of Moscow notes M. Milovanovitch's complete change of front since the beginning of the crisis, when he was thought to be Baron d'Aehrenthal's agent; the danger of war has once more loomed near. The "Novoe Vremya" also comments on the fratricidal policy pursued by Serbia and Bulgaria, and wonders if Turkey will see that to make exorbitant demands of Bulgaria is to thrust her into Austria's arms; also can Bulgaria realise what Austrian support must mean for her, with the example of Croatia before her eyes?

No. 515.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 1781/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, January 16, 1909.

Tel. (No. 10.) Most Confidential.

D. 4 P.M.

Your tel[egram] 13, confidential.⁽¹⁾

You may inform the Turkish Amb[assado]r confidentially that an agreement or an alliance of a defensive character between Bulgaria and Turkey would it appears to us be of mutual advantage to both those countries and tend to preserve peace in the Balkans. We have reason to believe that the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t is inclined

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 564, No. 513.]

to propose something of the kind and if the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t were favourably inclined, they might count on H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnmen]t regarding it favourably. If Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t raise their offer, as seems probable from Sir G. Buchanan's tel[egram] No. 4,⁽²⁾ the Porte might accept an alliance to make up for its insufficiency.

(²) [Not reproduced.]

No. 516.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 1994/29/06/44.

(No. 10.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 16, 1909.

Count Mensdorff called at the Foreign Office on the afternoon of January 11th and handed to Sir C. Hardinge the accompanying *aide-mémoire* respecting the negotiations with Turkey which gave the substance of a communication from Baron d'Aehrenthal and was to be regarded as having been read. Count Mensdorff was very much pleased with it, and asked for the views of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t.

He was told that I had already seen the information contained in the *aide-mémoire*, as it had appeared in the press and had been confirmed by Your Excellency, but that I had not yet had time to express my opinion on it. Sir C. Hardinge's own personal opinion was that it was a very satisfactory advance on the part of Baron d'Aehrenthal and should form a basis for agreement. Sir C. Hardinge mentioned that we had heard from the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t that they had almost arrived at a satisfactory solution with the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t, which looked very promising. He remarked, however, that he hoped that the condition attached to the offer of the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t was merely meant to save appearances and not to take away with one hand what was given with the other.

Count Mensdorff assured him that, from the German text, he was convinced that it was merely a formal condition intended, as Sir C. Hardinge suggested, to save appearances.

Sir C. Hardinge took the opportunity of reminding Count Mensdorff that I was anxious to hear on what grounds Baron d'Aehrenthal gave credit to the reports about Mr. Noel Buxton distributing money and employing agents in Servia, as stated by him to Your Excellency.

He replied that he had already written to Baron d'Aehrenthal on the subject and would do so again.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

Enclosure in No. 516.

Aide-mémoire unofficially communicated by Count Mensdorff, January 11, 1909.

Quand la Monarchie austro-hongroise s'est vue, au commencement du mois d'Octobre dernier, obligée à procéder à l'annexion des Provinces jusqu'alors occupées par elle, le Cabinet de Vienne avait, avant tout, le désir de convaincre la Turquie que cette action, devenue nécessaire par les circonstances, n'était nullement dirigée contre le nouveau Régime à Constantinople et le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal continuait d'attacher, comme dans le passé, un grand prix au maintien des bonnes et amicales relations avec l'Empire ottoman. Dans ce but le Gouvernement austro-hongrois a simultanément déclaré qu'il renonçait à tous les droits qui revenaient à la Monarchie dans le Sandjak de Novibazar.—Au courant des négociations menées depuis à

la proclamation de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale Apostolique en date du 5 Octobre d[ernie]r le Cabinet de Vienne n'a pas manqué de faire preuve de son esprit de conciliation et de ses meilleures intentions. Aussi a-t-il offert à la Turquie des avantages économiques fort importants pour le cas qu'on arriverait à une entente.—Vu que la Porte ne discontinuait pas, malgré nos dits offres, à insister sur une compensation pécuniaire pour la perte de ses droits nominaux de Souveraineté en Bosnie et dans l'Herzégovine en désirant que la Monarchie prenne à sa charge une partie aliquote de la Dette publique ottomane, le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal s'est appliqué d'étudier la question à quel point on pourrait répondre aussi à cette demande de la Turquie. L'acceptation d'une partie aliquote de la dette publique ottomane paraissait de prime abord exclue. Cependant le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal, guidé du désir de faire tout ce qui dépendait de lui pour éliminer les controverses existantes avec la Turquie et de servir par là à l'intérêt de la paix, s'est décidé à offrir au Gouvernement Ottoman, comme dédommagement pour la perte de ses droits de Souveraineté—(bien que ces droits ne soient que nominels)—le payement de la somme de 2½ millions de livres turques à titre de prix d'achat des propriétés appartenant à l'Etat en Bosnie et l'Herzégovine. La condition, du reste purement de formalité que le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal attache à cette proposition consiste à ce qu'un arbitre reconnaisse ces biens comme étant effectivement—d'après leur nature—biens d'état.

J'ai invité, le 8 c[ouran]t, le Marquis de Pallavicini à s'aboucher dans le susdit sens avec le Grand Vizir.

En donnant connaissance du contenu de la présente dépêche au Secrétaire d'Etat Vous voudrez bien faire observer que, le Cabinet britannique ayant à différentes reprises désigné le payement d'une compensation matérielle comme le moyen le plus efficace pour faire reconnaître la nouvelle situation par la Turquie, nous ne doutons pas que le Gouvernement britannique appréciera par conséquent l'esprit de conciliation dont nous faisons preuve vis-à-vis de la Turquie, dans l'intérêt de la paix générale en Europe et nous sommes convaincus que le Cabinet de St. James en tiendra compte dans son jugement de la situation politique en général.—

No. 517.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, January 17, 1909.

F.O. 2147/26/09/44A.

D. 8:10 p.m.

Tel. (No. 15.) Most Confidential.

R. 9:40 p.m.

Your telegram No. 10.⁽¹⁾

I have communicated first portion of above-mentioned telegram to Turkish Ambassador. His Excellency is of opinion that offer of an alliance should come spontaneously from Bulgarian side. Turkey would welcome such an alliance, but must be satisfied that it is offered in good faith, and would put a stop to Bulgarian agitation in Macedonia in the future. His Excellency thinks that if amount of Bulgarian indemnity to Turkey is considered reasonable by Powers, and Grand Vizier can also point to conclusion of a genuine alliance with Bulgaria, public opinion in Turkey will be satisfied.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 564-5, No. 515.]

No. 518.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, January 17, 1909.*

F.O. 2142/26/09/44A.

D. 8.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 19.)

R. 9.45 P.M.

Bulgaria.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs is a little troubled at reports as to Austria proposing to assist Bulgaria in a financial arrangement with Turkey. He considers this should be avoided if possible. He is puzzled that Paris has not yet given expert opinion required.

No. 519.

*Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.**Vienna, January 18, 1909.*

F.O. 2444/2133/09/3.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 17.)

R. 7.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 8.⁽¹⁾

I spoke to Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day on the subject of the irritation caused in England by gross attacks made in Austrian press against the King. I told him matter was considered very serious by His Majesty's Government. On my drawing his attention to the article in the "Mittagszeitung," his Excellency repudiated any connection with that newspaper, and said that it had often personally attacked him. Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs remarked to me that he possessed a whole dossier of extracts from English newspapers inimical to Austria, and many of these contained most offensive remarks with regard to his Emperor.

His Excellency declared to me that he was a staunch Monarchist, and as such deprecated most strongly any personal attacks on Sovereigns. His Excellency expressed himself as full of regret at the (group undecypherable) attacks on His Majesty the King, and he told me he had spoken very seriously to a journalist who had recently published a virulent article against Great Britain. Such an article, he said, ran counter to his policy, which was to bring about a good understanding with England, and he hoped he would succeed in doing so now that settlement seemed probable with Turkey. He begged me to assure you that a *détente* had taken place in the public mind, and that he was doing his utmost to restrain Austrian press, but it was still possible that here and there a disagreeable article might appear—a remnant of recent irritation.

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs has also expressed to French Ambassador his desire to restrain press campaign against England.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

No. 520.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 3191/26/09/44A.

(No. 7.)

Belgrade, D. January 18, 1909.

Sir,

R. January 25, 1909.

I have the honour to report that on the 15th Instant I had an opportunity of some private conversation with the Austro-Hungarian Minister, and asked him whether, in view of the understanding between Austria and Turkey which was apparently taking shape, he did not think that something definite could now be done

to relax the tension between Austria and Servia. I was careful to explain that I made this inquiry entirely on my own account and without instructions.

Count Forgach replied that he had been doing his best for some time to make it clear to the Servian Government that Austria-Hungary would be well disposed to meet any wishes they might formulate, provided they were kept within reasonable and practical limits, but whenever they began to talk of Autonomy for Bosnia under the suzerainty of the Sultan, or of territorial compensation for Servia and Montenegro, he stopped them at once by declaring that such things were quite out of the question. He could not take the initiative in offering them economic advantages, such as a seat on the Danube Commission, assistance to realize the Danube Adriatic Railway Scheme, etc., because so moderate a politician as M. Stoyan Novakovitch had declared publicly in the Skupshtina that such offers would be "thrown back in the face of the Austrian Government," and he had in fact advised his Government that public opinion in Servia had not yet calmed down sufficiently to be ripe for conciliation or accessible to proposals of this kind. Moreover, from the Austrian point of view, the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina was a matter which did not concern Servia in the least, as she was neither a signatory of the Berlin Treaty nor the possessor of any historical or legal rights in those provinces, so that it could not be expected that the Austro-Hungarian Government should take the initiative in offering compensations to Servia for the annexation.

I answered that an idea had occurred to me which might perhaps contain useful possibilities. I knew that the Austrian Government had some time ago expressed their willingness and offered their co-operation for the connection of the Bosnian and Servian narrow gauge railway systems by a line from Uzhitze to Vishegrad, thus giving Servia an additional outlet to the sea. This might be amplified by a Convention assuring favourable rates for traffic to and from Servia over the Bosnian lines, and possibly by the concession of a bonded dépôt at Metkovitch or at the port of Ragusa, which would enable Servian imports and exports to be conveyed by that route without passing the Austro-Hungarian Customs at all, the Servian trucks being sealed for their transit through Bosnia and Dalmatia. I said that I quite understood the Austrian point of view as he had explained it to me, and the reluctance of the Austrian Government to come forward with any proposals, but that if he thought that a request of this kind on the part of the Servian Government would meet with favourable consideration, I might, subject to your approval, suggest it to them. I added that this idea must of course not be understood to supersede or prejudice the Danube Adriatic Railway Scheme in any way, but that it had the advantage of being realizable in a comparatively short time, as the Stalatz-Uzhitze line was in course of construction and the connecting link from the latter place to Vishegrad was only a matter of about 30 miles.

Count Forgach said he would consider the suggestion, but that he was afraid it might meet with opposition on the part of the Hungarian Government, who would deprecate competition with their trade route *viâ Fiume*. In any case he thought that the moment had not yet arrived when a suggestion of this kind would be useful in improving the relations between Austria and Servia, as public opinion in the latter country was still too excited to appreciate economic advantages. He would however revert to the subject again when he thought the proper moment had come.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

MINUTE.

Mr. Whitehead is doing very well.

E. G.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 2053/26/09/44.

(No. 12.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 18, 1909.

Count Mensdorff called at the Foreign Office on January 9th and informed Sir C. Hardinge that explanations had been given by the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs of his recent speech in the Skuptschina, and that the incident was closed.

Sir C. Hardinge expressed the satisfaction of His Majesty's Government at this news, and at the same time their regret that this incident, which in no way concerned England, should have provided another opportunity to the Austrian press for a baseless and unjustifiable attack against England. Both Count Mensdorff and Baron d'Aehrenthal were perfectly well aware that, thanks to the advice given by Great Britain, France, and Russia on two occasions during the last few months, the Servian Government had withdrawn their troops from the Austrian frontier and had ceased their military preparations, and yet, in spite of the Austrian press bureau being under the direct control of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs nothing had been done to correct the dissemination of such palpable untruths. The British press, under such provocation had shown extraordinary moderation and had treated the ravings of the Austrian press with the contempt they merited. It was not however with any idea of complaining of the Austrian press that this question had been alluded to, but simply in order to point out to the Austrian Ambassador that when papers like the "Neues Wiener Tageblatt" report interviews with private individuals such as Sir Thomas Barclay and attribute to him extraordinary political statements, adding that Sir T. Barclay is specially in the confidence of the King, the limit of propriety had been grossly exceeded. Sir C. Hardinge told him that, in the opinion of the King, such a statement in the press was "simply outrageous and that some notice should be taken of it," but at the same time made no formal complaint.

Count Mensdorff took down the name of the Austrian paper and then proceeded to justify the attitude of the Austrian press (which he said he deplored) by the attacks made on Austria in the British press.

Sir C. Hardinge denied that this held good and said that British public opinion had been deeply stirred by the violation of the Berlin Treaty by Austria, that England from the days of Napoleon had always vindicated the integrity of Treaties and would protest as loudly against any other Power under such circumstances. One could not help feeling that this agitation against England was being encouraged by Baron d'Aehrenthal against England for purposes of his own, since when a Deputy named Rodlich had recently made a bitter attack on England in the Reichsrath it had been received with applause and not a single member of the Government had got up to deprecate such language.

His Majesty's Government had taken note of the incident but did not complain. Sir C. Hardinge contrasted the difference of what took place when Mr. Gladstone, who was out of office, made some unfavourable comments about Austria in 1877.

Count Mensdorff replied that the Austrian parliamentary machinery is so different to ours that a Minister would not have the chance of getting up to speak in a deprecatory sense, and he added that he himself deplored these outbursts.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

No. 522.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, January 20, 1909.*

F.O. 2686/26/09/44A.

D. 8 P.M.

Tel. (No. 23.)

R. 9 P.M.

French Ambassador tells me that as the result of careful inquiries made at Vienna there appeared to be no question of a Bulgarian loan being floated there. He acquainted the Minister for Foreign Affairs with his information, which relieved him. French Ambassador also told me confidentially that Minister for Foreign Affairs had on several occasions spoken to him as to the friendly attitude France adopted towards Austria and of the tone of certain French journals, which he thought was too pro-Austrian. He had explained to the Minister for Foreign Affairs that France was merely acting in the interests of peace, and reminded him that France had declined to mediate between Austria and Turkey in respect of the boycott.

(Secret.)

I think that one of the reasons which causes some misgiving in the mind of the Minister for Foreign Affairs as to a Conference is that France will be inclined to support Austria, and that England will be disposed to associate herself with France, and thus leave Russia isolated if she pressed for compensation for Serbia and Montenegro.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [The following private letter from Sir Charles Hardinge (Carnock MSS.) deals further with this point.

Sir Charles Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, January 20, 1909.

Very many thanks for your interesting letter of the 14th instant.

I do not think that Isvolsky has any cause for being depressed as regards the Austrian agreement with Turkey. We all know that Russia wants peace and, by this settlement, one serious danger to peace has been removed. I can quite understand that he fears that Serbia and Montenegro may be neglected when the time for settlement arrives, and no doubt that will be the crucial moment for Russian policy. If Isvolsky can succeed in bringing about a satisfactory agreement between Turkey and Bulgaria—an agreement which will be satisfactory to them both—the position of Russia in the Balkans will be greatly strengthened, and her hands will then be free to deal with the Serbian and Montenegrin questions. It is all very well to talk of demanding autonomy for the two annexed Provinces, as it is absolutely certain that Austria will say that such autonomy must come from within rather than from without. As far as I can see the Powers will not be able to do more at the Conference than express a pious wish that the Emperor of Austria will grant to the two Provinces an autonomous administration, in accordance with the phrase (or words to that effect) made use of in the Proclamation that he issued at the time of the annexation. If the Austrians were wise they would quickly give some such administration to the two Provinces, and so close the mouths of the Slav races. I fear, however, that Aehrenthal is not clever enough to do that. We fully realize here the difficulties of Isvolsky's position, and you may count on our doing everything to assist him, as we feel that he has so far behaved extremely well towards us in many questions. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.]

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter touches on Persian affairs and Bulgarian compensation, and is unimportant.]

No. 523.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, January 20, 1909.*

F.O. 2684/26/09/44A.

D. 8.7 P.M.

Tel. (No. 21.)

R. 9 P.M.

Bulgaria-Turkey.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs has received French Memorandum, and he tells me that a copy has also been communicated to His Majesty's Government.

He thinks that it is no use to ask Bulgaria to pay more than the 100,000,000 fr[ances] suggested by the French banks, and he sincerely hopes that the Powers will fix that sum. He has heard from the Russian Ambassador at Constantinople that Turkey is now ready to come down to 120,000,000 fr[ances], and would even go to a lower figure if a rectification of the frontier were agreed upon. An arrangement therefore seemed quite possible on the basis 100,000,000 fr[ances].

I asked if he thought Bulgaria would agree to the conditions laid down by the French banks for the issue of a loan of 100,000,000 fr[ances]. He said that he thought the conditions could be made the subject of discussion, but he was most desirous that the Powers should fix without delay the sum at 100,000,000 fr[ances]. More than that it was clear Bulgaria could not pay. I believe that he is telegraphing to the Russian Ambassador at London, but he begged me also to telegraph to you and urge his request.

No. 524.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 2823/26/09/44A.

Paris, D. January 21, 1909.

Tel. (No. 16.) Confidential.

R. January 22, 1909.

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, in conversation with me yesterday, asked whether His Majesty's Government still desired a Conference. I said certainly, for otherwise on some future occasion the negotiations between Austria and Turkey and between Bulgaria and Turkey, if their results were not submitted to a Conference of the Powers parties to the Treaty of Berlin, might be quoted as precedents entitling some of the Powers signatories of a Treaty to come to Agreements in derogation of such Treaty without the consent of the remaining signatories.

The Minister said that the French Government also desired a Conference for the same reason, but he did not feel sure that the Russian Government still desired one. He intended to ask the Russian Ambassador, but he thought that perhaps the Russian Ambassador in London might be better able than his colleague at Paris to ascertain the real wishes of the Russian Government on the subject. M. Pichon evidently wished inquiry to be made through Count Benckendorff.

[ED. NOTE.—On the 19th January the *Times* published the Austro-Turkish protocol before the Austro-Hungarian Government had received a copy. The agreement was practically accepted on the 21st, but the protocol was not actually signed till the 26th. A copy was presented by Count Mensdorff to Sir Edward Grey on the 6th March. The text is printed for convenience of reference under date of February 26, pp. 638-40, No. 622, *encl.*]

No. 525.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey.

St. Petersburg, January 21, 1909.

. . . Isvolsky is in a very difficult position vis-a-vis to his public. His Balkan policy is regarded as a failure; and the Servian case will be treated as a test case, by which to judge whether he will succeed or not in retrieving the faults of Russian diplomacy. If we are unable to assist him we perhaps need not oppose him. At the same time, I do not think it very wise on the part of Russia to have gone so far in the way of assurances to Servia. Her Minister here has been told that "Russia will do all that is possible to help her;" and that "Russia preserves her entire liberty of action whatever arrangements may be made between Austria and Turkey." The

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

meaning of these assurances will doubtless be amplified in Belgrade, and may give rise to hopes which it will be difficult to realize. . . .⁽²⁾

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽²⁾ [The omitted parts of this letter deal in general with the Balkan situation, and with Cretan and Persian affairs.]

No. 526.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 2901/26/09/3.

(No. 13.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 22, 1909.

Count Mensdorff called here on the 18th instant and showed Sir C. Hardinge an article published some weeks ago in a magazine, which the latter saw for the first time, called "Near East" containing a disgraceful attack upon the Emperor Francis Joseph.⁽¹⁾

Sir C. Hardinge said that he was very sorry that such a scandalous article should have been written of a Sovereign whom everybody in England respected and admired. The paper was both new and obscure. Had it been pointed out at the time he would gladly have seen whether something could not be done to prevent its recurrence. As His Excellency had, in showing this article, alluded to the attack made on the King in the *Mittagszeitung*, Sir C. Hardinge pointed out that it was not merely the attacks on the King but the whole tone of the Austrian press and the attitude of the Austrian Government towards it, of which His Majesty's Government had just cause for complaint.

Count Mensdorff tried to argue that Baron d'Aehrenthal had no control over the press-bureau established in the Foreign Office in Vienna. This Sir C. Hardinge declined to believe otherwise it would have no *raison d'être* in its presence there. Besides it was notorious that the Viennese press published just as much or as little as the Austrian Government wished.

The Ambassador said that Baron d'Aehrenthal disclaimed any responsibility for what appeared in the *Mittagszeitung* and this is evidently so since it is not an inspired journal.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [The reference is to a monthly journal started about this time. The Editors have been informed that this journal, after change of ownership and policy, was issued as a weekly in May 1911, and has since changed its title to *The Near East and India*.]

No. 527.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 3115/26/09/44A.

(No. 12.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. January 22, 1909.

R. January 25, 1909.

On receipt of your telegram No. 4 of the 11th instant⁽¹⁾ I lost no time in communicating to Baron d'Aehrenthal by a private letter the satisfaction felt by His Majesty's Government at the prospect of a friendly agreement between Austria-Hungary and Turkey being arrived at, and in a subsequent interview with His Excellency I laid stress on the fact that your message had been a spontaneous one, and not the result of any communication which had passed between myself and you.

I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of my letter, together with His Excellency's reply to it.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Enclosure 1 in No. 527.

Sir F. Cartwright to Baron von Aehrenthal.

(Particulière.)

Mon cher Ministre,

Vienne, le 12 janvier, 1909.

Comme j'ai eu le plaisir de vous voir hier je ne désire pas vous déranger encore aujourd'hui, mais je tiens à vous informer que je viens de recevoir un télégramme de Sir Edward Grey par lequel il me fait part que l'Ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie à Londres lui a communiqué les nouvelles propositions faites à la Porte par son Gouvernement.

Sir Edward me prie de saisir la première occasion d'exprimer à Votre Excellence la satisfaction avec laquelle le Gouvernement Britannique voit à présent la probabilité de ce qu'un arrangement amical entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Turquie soit promptement conclu, arrangement qui contribuerait beaucoup, à son avis, au maintien de la paix dans les Balcons.

Veuillez, &c.

(Signé) FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

Enclosure 2 in No. 527.

Baron von Aehrenthal to Sir F. Cartwright.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Vienne, le 17 janvier, 1909.

Vous avez bien voulu, par votre lettre en date du 12 janvier courant, m'informer de la satisfaction que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique éprouvait en présence de la probabilité d'un prochain arrangement amical entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Turquie.

En vous remerciant, mon cher Ambassadeur, de cet aimable message, je tiens à constater que mes efforts étaient dès le début de l'action qui nous a été imposée par des raisons impérieuses, dirigés vers une entente amicale avec la Sublime Porte. Nous avons toujours été convaincus que nos relations avec l'Empire Ottoman ne sauraient revêtir le caractère d'une amitié sincère et durable qu'après avoir réglé avec lui l'état de choses en Bosnie-Herzégovine et au Sandjak d'une manière claire et définitive.

Veuillez, &c.

(Signé) AEHRENTHAL.

No. 528.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 2686/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, January 23, 1909.

Tel. (No. 63.)

D. 2 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 23.⁽¹⁾

I have already assured the Russian Gov[ernmen]t of my diplomatic support in the question of compensation to Servia and Montenegro with a view to arriving at a peaceful solution, and you may assure M. Isvolsky that I have not modified my intention.

I regard the agreement between Austria and Turkey very favourably because it has removed one great danger to peace, but I do not regard it as having disposed of other difficulties which were independent of it, though I wish also to see a peaceful solution of these.

Repeated to Vienna (No. 21), Paris (No. 40). January 23, 1909.

(1) [Not reproduced. It contained reference to a possible "misgiving" in the mind of M. Isvolski as to a Conference on the ground that "France will be inclined to support Austria, and that England will be disposed to associate herself with France, and thus leave Russia isolated if she presses for compensation for Servia and Montenegro."]

No. 529.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, January 24, 1909.*

F.O. 3073/26/09/44A.

D. 8.6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 27.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Bulgaria and Turkey. Your telegram No. 61.⁽¹⁾

I spoke to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day in the sense of your above telegram. I found that he was acquainted with your views from information he had received already. He is strongly of opinion that great risk is being incurred if settlement is delayed much longer. He is convinced that Bulgaria cannot pay more than 100,000,000 fr[ancs], and he remarked that the only other compensation which she could offer in addition is frontier rectification, which is clearly out of the question. He did not appear to think that two parties could settle affairs between themselves, and much regretted that for the sake of a few hundred thousand pounds the chances of a settlement were being gravely imperilled. He thought that Turkey might be induced to accept 100,000,000 fr[ancs] if it were explained to her that this was the utmost Bulgaria could afford to pay or could contrive to raise. He observed that Powers were pawing the ground while situation was becoming daily graver. I told him that personally I was every day more convinced that the best solution would be a speedy meeting of a Conference, as I much feared we should all drift into serious complications if discussions continued much longer. I asked if Bulgaria could not be assisted in increasing her figure, but he did not think so. He is much troubled, and fears we shall throw Bulgaria into the arms of Austria and Germany.

⁽¹⁾ [This telegram (F.O. 2684/26/09/44A) states that His Majesty's Government were not convinced that Bulgaria could not pay more than 100,000,000 francs, and that in any case Turkey could not be pressed to accept such a proposal; the two parties concerned should be left to negotiate a settlement if possible. It was repeated to Paris as No. 38 of January 23.]

No. 530.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, January 24, 1909.*

F.O. 3075/26/09/44A.

D. 8.7 P.M.

Tel. (No. 28.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 63.⁽¹⁾

I mentioned incidentally to Minister for Foreign Affairs the sense of your above-mentioned telegram. He said that he feared the question of finding an adequate compensation for Serbia was almost insoluble. He could not devise any way out of the difficulty. He had heard that at Cetinje the idea of a mixed Serbo-Montenegrin occupation of a portion of the sanjak had been revived, and that the British Representative at Cetinje had approved of it. I told him that I should have very great doubts as to whether this was the case. He observed that we had all solemnly agreed that no compensation should be given at Turkey's expense, and it was hardly likely that Turkey would agree to a mixed occupation, though M. Pachitch had said that she would. I do not think that he took project seriously.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 573, No. 528.]

No. 531.

*Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.**Sophia, January 24, 1909.*

F.O. 3080/26/09/44A.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 10.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

My telegrams Nos. 8 and 9.⁽¹⁾

It seems certain that two divisions have been mobilized, and I hear on good authority that a third has received orders for mobilization, not yet published, and

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

that reserves of a fourth have been ordered to hold themselves in readiness. Step is represented as a precautionary measure against supposed projected seizure by Turks of strategical points in frontier districts, which they claim as part compensation.

The statement which the President of the Council is to make in the Chamber to-morrow may throw light on ulterior intentions of the Government. I fear, however, that they are entering on a path from which they will not be able to turn back without first settling the question of compensation. Should Turks adopt counter-measures situation would become critical, as the army would resent repetition of mistake made last October of giving Turks time to prepare.

No. 532.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 3354/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, January 25, 1909.

Tel. (No. 65.)

D. 1.15 P.M.

Inform M. Iswolsky that I entirely approve of proposed representations at Sophia and Constantinople as communicated by Count Benckendorff and am sending instructions to British Representatives at both places to join in making them.

The sooner they are made the better. There is no truth in the report that we have directly or indirectly encouraged the idea of territorial compensations, which has never been mentioned to us officially.

You should ask M. Iswolsky whether it would not be desirable that Germany and Austria should be asked to join in these representations at Sophia and Constantinople. I can quite understand that M. Iswolsky may not like to make any approaches to Austria which would weaken his hands subsequently in pressing claims of Serbia and Montenegro but either France or ourselves could if he preferred it approach Germany and Austria, and it is of course understood that Bulgarian question must be settled without prejudicing the Servian and Montenegrin negotiations subsequently.

No. 533.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 3050/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, January 26, 1909.

Tel. (No. 26.)

D. 8 P.M.

Mr. Whitehead has not had any audience, but we have always persistently discouraged any thought of hostilities. As Baron d'Aehrenthal has referred once to Mr. Noel Buxton you may inform him that though I had previously known nothing of Mr. Buxton's proceedings in Serbia I have now discovered that he told the Servians not to expect any support from the Balkan Committee for British Naval assistance in case of war between Serbia and Austria and seems to have endeavoured to exercise a moderating influence.

No. 534.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, January 26, 1909.

F.O. 3484/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 25.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Austro-Turkish negotiations.

Baron von Aehrenthal told me to-day that he hoped to sign Protocol towards middle of February. The main hitch appears to be with regard to the questions of

raising customs duties, establishment of monopolies, and abolition of post offices. Turkey still demands unconditional consent of Austria to above points, while Austria-Hungary will only consent provided other Powers follow her example.

Baron von Aehrenthal raises no difficulties with regard to payment of indemnity.

When Protocol is signed it will have to be laid for approval before Turkish and Austro-Hungarian Parliaments. He is already in communication with his two Premiers on the subjects, and expects to receive their replies in a few days. When Parliamentary approval is obtained, ratification will follow in due course.

His Excellency informed me that it will be impossible to obtain this approval until boycott ceases.

I could not quite ascertain whether he had spoken in this sense to Turkish Ambassador.

No. 535.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 3844/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, January 27, 1909.

Tel. (No. 89.)

D. 11:30 P.M.

I am not quite clear from Russian Ambassador's communication made confidentially for my opinion what M. Iswolsky proposes. I understand it to be in effect that Bulgaria should become responsible for part of Turkey's debt to Russia and that Russia would accept repayment from Bulgaria in easy instalments.

I should be quite ready to support such a solution if practicable, but I fear it would not have the attraction for Turkey of the cash payment of a lump sum, and as Bulgarian representative here continues to affirm in the strongest terms the determination of Bulgaria not to go beyond 82 million francs I doubt her agreeing to anything reasonable except under united pressure of all the Powers.

I have done my utmost to impress upon Turkey the desirability of settling with Bulgaria upon easy terms, but it is exceedingly difficult for the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t to accept as little as 100 million francs; it might be accepted if some other concession could be thrown in which would soothe Turkish public opinion, but nothing of this sort has been suggested except some rectification of the frontier to which however unimportant strong objection seems to be felt.

Meanwhile it is increasingly dangerous for settlement to be delayed, and if it would commend itself to M. Iswolsky I think of proposing that failing the settlement proposed by him the six Powers should intimate at Constantinople and Sophia that they cannot allow the peace of Europe to be disturbed and must insist upon the amount to be paid by Bulgaria being referred to them for decision. You might point out that if this course were adopted it would prevent Bulgaria being thrown into the arms of Austria; I am convinced it would be in the interest of both Turkey and Bulgaria to accept the decision of the Powers and should therefore cordially recommend this course at Constantinople. Bulgaria is so stiff that nothing we say has the least effect; I fear she is indifferent to peace and I doubt whether anything less than the sharp and united pressure of all six Powers will induce her to agree to abide by their decision.

No. 536.

Memorandum communicated confidentially by Count Benckendorff.

F.O. 3844/26/09/44.

January 27, 1909.

L'échange d'idées entre les Gouvernements Anglais, Français et le nôtre concernant un arrangement entre la Turquie et la Bulgarie nous fait penser que, à

part une rectification territoriale peu désirable, les offres du Gouvernement Bulgare ne sauraient satisfaire le Gouvernement Turc. Dans l'opinion du Cabinet de Londres, une somme globale de 120 millions serait le minimum de nature à satisfaire la Turquie. D'un autre côté, les cercles financiers en France déclarent qu'il serait impossible d'émettre un emprunt Bulgare dépassant 100 millions comportant une somme d'intérêt de 6,850,000 francs et qui, en outre, serait soumis à des conditions de contrôle ou diplomatiques ne présentant guère de solution pratique.

Dans ces conditions le Cabinet Impérial ne voit plus d'utilité pratique à continuer les négociations dans le même sens que jusqu'ici.

Il n'en reste pas moins de l'intérêt manifeste et direct des Puissances de continuer à contribuer à une solution, la plus rapide possible, des questions pendantes entre la Turquie et la Bulgarie. Ceci disposerait le Cabinet Impérial à étudier une nouvelle combinaison financière.

Le but à atteindre est de satisfaire la Turquie sans surcharger le budget Bulgare. Par conséquent, le point le plus important au point de vue Bulgare concerne moins le montant du capital que le service d'intérêts annuels.

Partant de ce point de vue, le Cabinet Impérial pourrait avancer la somme nécessaire au règlement complet des comptes entre la Bulgarie et la Turquie en escomptant la contribution que lui paye la Turquie.

La Bulgarie amortirait sa dette en 50 ans à peu près tout en payant une somme annuelle d'intérêts et d'amortissement inférieure à celle qui lui serait imposée par un emprunt en France.

S'il s'agissait de verser au Gouvernement Turc une somme de 120 millions, il en coûterait moins à la Bulgarie que d'emprunter 100 millions et elle n'aurait à subir aucune condition embarrassante de contrôle ou de garantie.

Les avantages de cette combinaison pour la Bulgarie sont évidents. Il ne resterait plus qu'à obtenir son consentement à un paiement à la Turquie de 120 millions de francs.

Mais, avant de communiquer à ce sujet avec le Gouvernement Bulgare, le Cabinet Impérial serait extrêmement désireux de connaître quel accueil les Cabinets de Londres et de Paris feront à cette combinaison, et de savoir nommément si l'un et l'autre seraient disposés à user de toute leur influence à Constantinople et à Sofia pour que la Turquie et la Bulgarie y accèdent.

Cette combinaison et la présente démarche nous ont été inspirées par le désir de marquer notre solidarité avec les gouvernements Anglais et Français au cours des négociations, dont la crise des Balkans est l'objet, et celui de tenir compte, autant que faire se peut, de l'opinion émise par le Cabinet Britannique que le Gouvernement Ottoman ne pourrait pas réduire davantage ses demandes.

Veuillez faire part de ce qui précède à Sir Edward Grey très confidentiellement et nous informer le plus rapidement qu'il Vous sera possible de le faire.

No. 537.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 3838/26/09/44.

(No. 47.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 27, 1909.

M. Cambon told me to-day that M. Pichon had replied to the Russian communication about Bulgaria and Turkey suggesting that, though there might be difficulties in inviting Austria to join, Germany should be invited.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [v. Count Benckendorff's views to M. Isvolski, January 28, 1909, on this question, which seem to give a different account: *Siebert* (1921), p. 231.]

I told M. Cambon that I had replied to the Russian communication on the same day in the same way, agreeing to its proposals, but suggesting that both Austria and Germany should be invited to join: for I saw no reason, now that Austria had settled with Turkey, why we should not all act together as regards Bulgaria. I had told M. Iswolsky that, if he felt any delicacy in approaching Austria, France or England could approach her instead.

Of course, when we came to consider Serbia and Montenegro, the case with regard to Austria would be different. Last October I had told M. Iswolsky that, though we did not wish to see any question pushed to the point of war, we would support, so far as diplomatic assistance went, the proposals which he contemplated as regards Serbia and Montenegro. I had no exact idea as to what M. Iswolsky might propose; we had been so occupied by other matters that I had not questioned him on the point, and he had said nothing further, but the promise I had made to him held good.

For the present, I thought we ought to concentrate upon the Bulgarian difficulty.

I then told M. Cambon the substance of my conversation with the Bulgarian Agent yesterday. I also told him that I had impressed upon the Turkish Ambassador, speaking as a friend of Turkey, the desirability of making easy terms with Bulgaria.

I pointed out to M. Cambon that all the Powers, apparently, were agreed that Bulgaria could pay more than 82 million francs; M. Pichon, for instance, and Baron d'Aehrenthal, and M. Iswolsky all considered that she could pay at any rate 100 million francs; for our part, we had thought 125 million francs should be the sum. I thought, though Turkey had not told me so definitely, that Turkey would accept 125 million francs; the final difference, therefore, was between 100 millions and 125 millions.

I thought the six Great Powers ought not to allow the peace of Europe to be disturbed for a small difference such as this. They should insist, if Turkey and Bulgaria could not agree, that the actual amount of the sum to be paid should be referred to the arbitration of the six Great Powers.

In the course of conversation, M. Cambon expressed the opinion that Turkey had not really taken any aggressive military measures against the Bulgarian frontier, and that therefore the Bulgarian allegation to that effect was a pretext.

I agreed in this opinion.

I also told M. Cambon that the Turkish Ambassador had pointed out to me how impossible it would be for Turkey to accept a small sum in the face of the Bulgarian mobilisation: Turkish public opinion would not stand that. This, I thought, was indisputable.

The Turkish Ambassador had also told me that it would make matters much easier for Turkey if something extra could be thrown in by Bulgaria, in order to soothe public opinion in Turkey. He had not been able to suggest anything other than a rectification of the frontier, however unimportant. In telling this to M. Cambon, I said that I knew the difficulties there were with regard to any rectification; but it would be a great help if some extra thing of this kind could be discovered.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 538.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 3921/26/09/44.

Tel. (No. 49.)

Foreign Office, January 28, 1909.

D. 10.40 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.

You should make a communication in this sense as soon as your five colleagues receive similar instructions.

This takes the place of communication contemplated in my telegram No. 30.⁽¹⁾
 Also to Sir G. Buchanan No. 23, January 28, 1909. No. 14.

⁽¹⁾ [The following table shows the text of the two telegrams containing instructions as to the communication to be made by the six Powers :

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

Foreign Office,
 F.O. 3354/26/09/44. *January 25, 1909.*
Tel. (No. 30.) D. 3:30 p.m.

H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] heard with concern of the military preparations alleged to be in progress on the Turco-Bulgarian frontier. They wish to spare no effort to prevent a sudden outbreak of hostilities between Bulgaria and Turkey and have assented to the proposal of the Russian Gov[ernment] that joint representations to that end should be made at Constantinople and Sofia by the Representatives of Great Britain, France, Russia, and possibly of Italy.

You should, when your French, Russian and Italian Colleagues received instructions to act with you, inform the Turkish Gov[ernment] Bulgarian

that their military preparations are paralysing the efforts of the Powers who are working for a friendly settlement of the questions which have arisen. The Powers are seriously studying the question of what compensation is necessary and practicable, but they could not approve of any proposal for territorial compensation, either on one side or the other, since it could only tend to embitter the actual situation. You should urge strongly the necessity, in order to ensure the ultimate success of the negotiations,

of the Turkish Gov[ernment] as well as that Bulgarian of Turkey abstaining from all acts or measures which could be regarded in any way as being of a provocative character.

You should cooperate with your Russian, French and Italian colleagues in making a representation in this sense with the least possible delay.

Similar instructions have been sent to the Sofia Representatives at Constantinople.

Also to Sir G. Buchanan, No. 14, January 25, 1909. Repeated to Paris No. 46, Rome No. 26, St. Petersburg No. 66, January 25, 1909.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

Foreign Office,
 F.O. 3921/26/09/44. *January 28, 1909.*
Tel. (No. 48.)

Russian Ambassador has communicated following circular telegram sent by M. Isvolsky to Representatives at London, Paris, Rome, Berlin and Vienna :

" In view of Bulgarian note addressed to the Representatives at Sofia and of our opinion that any military movements on frontier might give rise to local tension which would become dangerous to the general peace, we consider that the Great Powers should instruct their Representatives at Constantinople and Sofia to make without delay a simultaneous communication to the Turkish and Bulgarian Governments in the following sense :

" Military measures on the Turco-Bulgarian frontier can only hinder, to the detriment of the interests of the two countries, the efforts of the Powers to bring about an amicable understanding between Turkey and Bulgaria; the Powers would favourably consider any arrangement calculated to facilitate such an understanding, but hold that any question of a rectification of frontier in favour of one side or the other should be put aside altogether as likely to embitter the relations between Turkey and Bulgaria and to compromise the general situation. It is therefore indispensable to the success of these negotiations that Bulgaria, and likewise Turkey, should abstain from any measures that might be interpreted as provocative."

(I am instructing H[is] M[ajesty's] Representatives at Constantinople and Sofia to make a communication in this sense as soon as their five colleagues received similar instructions.

This communication is substituted for that contemplated by my Telegram to Sir G. Lowther No. 30.)⁽²⁾

Also to Sir A. Nicolson No. 97, Sir F. Bertie No. 67, Sir E. Goschen No. 9, Sir F. Cartwright No. 28, Sir R. Rodd No. 36, Sir G. Buchanan No. 22, January 28, 1909.

⁽²⁾ [The last two paragraphs, in brackets, were not sent to Sir G. Lowther or Sir G. Buchanan.]

Memorandum communicated to Count Benckendorff.

F.O. 3844/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, January 28, 1909.

With reference to Count Benckendorff's confidential memorandum of the 27th inst[ant]⁽¹⁾ embodying M. Iswolsky's proposals for a solution of the question of the compensation to be paid by Bulgaria to Turkey, Sir E. Grey, although not perfectly clear with regard to M. Iswolsky's wishes, understands the suggestion to be that a portion of the debt owing by Turkey to Russia should be taken over by Bulgaria, who should be allowed by Russia to make repayment in easy instalments.

A proposal of this kind would receive our ready support if it were found practicable, but on the one hand it is doubtful whether any step short of pressure from all the Powers will induce Bulgaria to accept anything reasonable, since the Bulgarian Agent in London declares as firmly as ever that his Government will not go beyond their offer of 82,000,000 francs; and on the other hand it seems probable that Turkey will not be inclined to regard a solution of the kind suggested as an adequate substitute for the payment of a lump sum in cash.

The opinion of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] as to the desirability of Turkey making a settlement upon easy terms with Bulgaria has been impressed as strongly as possible upon the Turkish Gov[ernment], but it seems extremely difficult for them, in view of public opinion in Turkey, to agree to a settlement for so small a sum as 100,000,000 francs: this might be possible if the money payment were supplemented by a promise of some other concession, for the sake of conciliating public opinion, but the suggested frontier rectification, unimportant as it may be, which is the only proposal of the kind yet made, seems to arouse great opposition in Bulgaria.

In view of the fact that this delay in the negotiations is increasing the danger of the situation, Sir E. Grey would suggest that, if M. Iswolsky's proposed arrangement falls to the ground, urgent representations should be made to the Governments of Turkey and Bulgaria by the six Powers to the effect that the amount of compensation to be paid by Bulgaria must be left to their decision, as it is impossible that they should allow the question to disturb the peace of Europe. Sir E. Grey would be glad to be favoured with M. Iswolsky's views as to this proposal. If such a measure were taken Bulgaria would not be thrown into the arms of Austria; as it seems certain that both Bulgaria and Turkey would profit by accepting the settlement decided upon by the Powers, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] would not hesitate cordially to recommend the Turkish Government to adopt this proposal. The attitude of Bulgaria is so uncompromising that our representations are quite ineffectual; she is, it is to be feared, unconcerned for the preservation of peace, and it seems improbable that she will be persuaded to accept a settlement arranged by the 6 Powers unless they unite to bring strong pressure to compel her to do so.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 576-7, No. 536.]

No. 540.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 3570/26/09/44.

(No. 43.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 28, 1909.

Monsieur Cambon called on the 22nd instant and, by order of his Government, developed the theory that Bulgaria was unable to pay more than 100 million francs as compensation to Turkey. He also said that it would not be possible to float a larger loan on the Paris market. It was therefore suggested that all the Powers should exert

pressure at Sophia and Constantinople to obtain the acceptance of the payment of this sum. The French Government invited the adhesion of His Majesty's Government to this proposal.

Sir C. Hardinge told Monsieur Cambon that His Majesty's Government would be very pleased if a satisfactory agreement to both sides were arrived at, even at the price of 100 million francs, but that pressure or advice at Constantinople to accept a smaller sum than 125 million francs was out of the question. He thereupon read to Monsieur Cambon my telegram No. 36 to you of the 22nd instant,⁽¹⁾ in which I informed Y[our] E[xc]ellency of this view.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 541.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 3947/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 102.)

Foreign Office, January 30, 1909.

Your tel[egram] No. 38.⁽¹⁾

Inform M. Isvolsky that I entirely approve his proposal which provides a practical solution that should be satisfactory to both Turkey and Bulgaria.

I presume that M. Isvolsky will take the initiative in whatever steps may be necessary to obtain its acceptance, and you may assure him that he can count on our full support and on our readiness to advise both the Turkish and Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]ts to accept it, if he should express to us that wish.

From a communication made to me yesterday by the Bulgarian Rep[resentati]ve it appears that direct negotiations between Turkey and Bulgaria are no longer possible, and that the intervention of the Powers is now urgently necessary to secure a peaceful solution.

Repeated to :—Constantinople (No. 53), Sofia (No. 26), Berlin (No. 13), Paris (No. 71), Rome (No. 39), Vienna (No. 31). January 30, 1909.

(¹) [Not reproduced. It replies to Sir E. Grey's telegram No. 89, *supra*, p. 576, No. 535, and contains details of M. Isvolski's proposals. These, in their more final form, are described, *infra*, pp. 581-2, No. 542.]

No. 542.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 4492/29/06/44A.

(No. 72.)

St. Petersburg, D. January 30, 1909.

Sir,

R. February 3, 1909.

M. Iswolsky showed me last night at an evening party a communication which the Bulgarian Agent, M. Tzokoff, had made to him that afternoon, and which he said was of the nature of an ultimatum. I could only read it hurriedly in the circumstances, but it certainly gave me the impression of being of a minatory character, stating in very plain terms that Bulgaria would not pay more than 82 million francs, and intimating that if the difficulty with Turkey could not be settled on those terms, Bulgaria would have recourse to other means. M. Iswolsky said that the situation was now a very serious one, and it was clear to him that it was useless to press the compensation question on the lines hitherto followed if war were to be averted. I told His Excellency that information which had reached me that evening from Sofia showed that matters had grown very serious, and that it seemed to me that he would be doing a good service in the interests of peace if he could propose without delay a settlement satisfactory to both parties. Time was of

great importance and if he could propound a settlement it would be well that he should do so at once. He asked if I meant that he should "go alone to Sofia" and make a proposal? I replied that consultations with other Powers would take time, and if he could devise a scheme which would meet the requirements of both parties, and ensure peace, I was sure that all Governments would be glad. I told him that I was merely expressing my personal opinion, and I had no idea how you would view my suggestions; but I knew you were most desirous that a settlement should be reached. M. Iswolsky said that he would go home and see if he could not work out a project which would satisfy Bulgaria and be acceptable to Turkey. He thought he might find it possible on the basis of his former proposals as to the Russian War Indemnity to work out an acceptable scheme.

I paid a visit to M. Iswolsky this morning, and he stated to me that he had sat up until three in the morning, but he thought he had found a solution. He had telegraphed to the Russian Representative at Sofia to the effect that Russia would find the Bulgarian Government 82 million francs on easy terms, and that Russia would settle matters for them with Turkey. His plan was, he said, that Russia should renounce twenty years of the War Indemnity Annuities, which if capitalized should bring in 150 million francs. Here I think M. Iswolsky has made a miscalculation, as the annuity is 8 million francs, and I should doubt if the capitalization would produce in 20 years 150 million francs. However, he stated distinctly that Russia would be ready to give up sufficient annuities to produce 150 million francs. Of course if Turkey could be induced to accept less, then all the better. As to Bulgaria, and here I confess I do not quite follow M. Iswolsky's calculations, he would ask her to pay 4 or $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. on 82 million francs for a period of years sufficient to reimburse Russia for the sacrifice she makes on account of the War Indemnity Annuities. He argues that if she had borrowed 100 million francs in the Paris Market she would have had to pay a far heavier interest and would also have been submitted to some other onerous conditions; while in his proposed transaction she would pay a moderate annual interest though possibly for a longer period. I am not an expert financier, and am unable to say if the transaction is a feasible one: but M. Iswolsky appeared to be quite satisfied that the matter was perfectly simple, and presumably he had had some financial advice. He told me that he had telegraphed to the Russian Representatives at all the Capitals to announce the steps which he had taken and expressing the hope that the Cabinets would support them.⁽¹⁾ There was, it is true, a little constitutional difficulty in the transaction, as the War Indemnity Annuities were inscribed on the Russian Budget, but still he had no doubt that difficulty would easily be surmounted. He considered that if Bulgaria refused his offer it would be evident that she did not desire peace, or that she had some arrangement with Austria-Hungary. The attitude which she would adopt towards his proposal would be a test of her sincerity. He felt convinced, both for reasons of the internal quietude in Bulgaria and for external peace, it was essential that the present tension should cease as soon as possible. From information which he had received he feared not only war outside, but possibly serious events within Bulgaria, and though Russia had no special reason to be exceptionally well-disposed towards Prince Ferdinand, it would be most unfortunate and most dangerous if at this moment a dynastic upset were to occur in Bulgaria.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [A communiqué, embodying these terms, was issued to the press on February 2, 1909.]

No. 543.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, January 31, 1909.*

F.O. 4101/26/09/44A.

D. 8.21 P.M.

Tel. (No. 41.)

R. 9.40 P.M.

Turkey and Bulgaria. Your telegram No. 102.⁽¹⁾

I communicated substance of above telegram to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day. He was much gratified and very grateful to you. He has some apprehensions lest difficulties may be made at Constantinople, and would be grateful if you would instruct Sir G. Lowther to support his proposals, as reported in my telegram No. 39,⁽²⁾ when they come before the Porte. He attaches great importance to this. I understand that before approaching latter he will await reply from Sophia; and hitherto he has only sketched them verbally to the Turkish Ambassador here, who seemed to have some doubt as to whether Porte would be pleased with them, and to have thought Russia might have renounced claims to all future payments of the war indemnity, which M. Isvolsky seems to think is rather a large order at present. Ambassador was only expressing his personal views, and I told M. Isvolsky that the former was not always accurate in his forecasts, as he once told me that he was sure Grand Vizier would never accept pecuniary indemnity from Austria-Hungary.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 581, No. 541.]⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. It is identical in substance with the despatch of the same date given, *supra*, pp. 581-2, No. 542.]

No. 544.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*St. Petersburg, January 31, 1909.*

F.O. 4100/26/09/44A.

D. 8.22 P.M.

Tel. (No. 40.)

R. 9.20 P.M.

Servia. Your telegram No. 105.⁽²⁾

M. Isvolsky tells me that he did receive a Memorandum from the Servian Government which the latter proposed to circulate amongst the Powers. He read to me his reply, which was to the effect that Servia, as an independent Power, could naturally do as she liked, but that the form and substance of her Memorandum were, in his opinion, unfortunate, and also that the moment was most inopportune for launching it, and that he wished to have nothing to do with it. He thought that the Memorandum would only embitter Austria-Hungary. I did not think it necessary to tell him that he had only received a truncated copy, as his objections to what he had received were sufficiently strong.

He fears that Servian question will be the most difficult and dangerous of all to settle satisfactorily.

⁽¹⁾ [Repeated to Mr. Whitehead as No. 9, and to Sir F. Cartwright as No. 34, both of February 1.]⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 545.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 4100/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 2, 1909.

Tel. (No. 10.)

D. 1.20 P.M.

Sir A. Nicolson's tel[egram] No. 40 (Jan[uary] 31).⁽¹⁾

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] agree with M. Isvolsky as to bad effect issue of memorandum would have on Austro-Serb relations.

Repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 118), February 2, 1909.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 546.

*Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.**Sophia, February 2, 1909.*

F.O. 4469/26/09/44A.

D. 1.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 24.)

R. 1.25 P.M.

Sir G. Lowther's telegram No. 30.⁽¹⁾

From language held by President of the Council yesterday I fear that refusal by Turkey to accept Russian proposals would inevitably lead to war.

After having had such favourable terms pressed on them by the three Powers Bulgarian Government will never pay more than eighty-two million francs nor will they allow question to drag on till Turkey is ready.

I hear from a reliable source that at a Cabinet Council last week all the Ministers but two were in favour of immediate mobilization and that as a compromise it was decided to send the second Bulgarian Note to the Powers on the understanding that mobilization was to follow at once should it fail to effect prompt settlement.

The six Agents are to make this evening the representations referred to in your telegram No. 23.⁽²⁾

Sent to Constantinople.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced, *v. infra*, No. 548, *note*.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 578-9, No. 538.]

No. 547.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 4487/26/09/44.

Constantinople, February 2, 1909

Tel. (No. 32.)

R. 2.9 P.M.

Sir G. Buchanan's telegram No. 24.⁽¹⁾

Russian Ambassador told me to-day that he had received no instructions to make any proposal to the Porte with regard to the Russian offer. He had not been able to say anything definite to the Grand Vizier, as his Government had given him no indication as to the total sum Turkey would be likely to receive. The Ambassador declared that he had not received details set forth in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 39.⁽²⁾

It is unreasonable to expect Turkey to give a reply so promptly as the Bulgarian Government seems to expect, as such a proposal as that now made by Russia will require examination from many aspects here.

The extreme moderation shown by Turkey in abstaining from mobilization, in the face of the provocative attitude of the Bulgarian Government, furnishes evidence that Turkish Government are prepared to consider any proposals made towards a pacific solution.

(Sent to Sophia.)

Repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 122), February 3, 1909.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. immediately preceding document*.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 583, No. 543 *note*, and pp. 581-2, No. 542.]

No. 548.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 4342/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, February 2, 1909.

Tel. (No. 63.)

D. 3.30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 30.⁽¹⁾

Grand Vizier's proposal contained in your tel[egram] No. 20⁽¹⁾ is impracticable.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. These telegrams relate to the proposal made by the Grand Vizier for a settlement on the basis of the "payment of 100,000,000 fr. at once and 25,000,000 fr. later, question of rectification of frontier being eliminated."]

It would entail restitution of the railway which the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t would never admit.

As you are aware, the question of the Straits was discussed by M. Isvolsky in London last October and, in deference to my urgent repres[entatio]ns, he agreed that the question should be dropped during existing complications. This decision was confirmed by his speech in the Duma on the 25th Dec[ember]. In the communications which have recently passed between H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] and the Russian Gov[ernmen]t no mention of the Straits has been made, nor would I have approved of the last Russian proposal to the Turkish and Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]ts if it had embarrassed the Porte by being coupled with the question of the Straits. The question of compensation to be paid by Bulgaria should therefore be treated on its merits and you may reassure the Grand Vizier on this point and give him the information contained in Sir A. Nicolson's tel[egram] No. 39 of Jan[uary] 30.⁽³⁾

You should make quite clear to the Grand Vizier that were the Powers to act as he suggests, and to fix an equitable sum and impose it on both Turkey and Bulgaria he could not possibly hope to obtain more than 100 million francs, since all the Powers, with the exception of England, are agreed that this sum would be adequate compensation and as much as Bulgaria is in a position to pay. It is moreover not certain that the Bulgarians would, except under extreme and united pressure, agree to pay even this sum. The fact that Turkey would receive at least an additional twenty million francs has been the deciding factor with H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t in their approval of the Russian proposal, and I see no other way of obtaining so large an amount of compensation.

The details of the arrangement to be made between Russia and Turkey so as to secure compensation from Bulgaria of at least 120 million francs effective, should be a matter of negotiation between the two Gov[ernmen]ts with the assistance of expert financial advice, but we are of opinion that the proposal should be accepted in principle on this basis without undue delay, since the situation is critical and may grow more so day by day.

(3) [*v. supra*, p. 583, No. 543 note, and pp. 581-2, No. 542.]

No. 549.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Sophia, February 2, 1909.

F.O. 4486/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 25.)

D. 7.40 P.M.

R. 9 P.M.

My telegram No. 24.⁽¹⁾

Representatives of the Powers have just made an identic communication to the Minister for Foreign Affairs in the sense of your telegram No. 22.⁽²⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs replied that military measures taken were of a precautionary (group omitted: ? nature) and covered no aggressive designs against Turkey, with whom Bulgaria desired to cultivate good relations. He trusted that if Turkey accepted Russian proposals reserves could be disbanded within a few days. He greatly appreciated efforts made by Powers to bring about a peaceful settlement.

(Sent to Constantinople.)

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 584, No. 546.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 579, No. 538, note, Sir E. Grey to Sir G. Lowther, Tel. No. 48, repeated to Sir G. Buchanan as Tel. No. 22.]

No. 550.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, February 2, 1909.*

F.O. 4484/26/09/44A.

D. 7.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 44.)

R. 9 P.M.

Turkey and Bulgaria.

Minister for Foreign Affairs (? appears) much pleased at the acceptance by the Bulgarian Government of his proposals,⁽¹⁾ and he hopes that Turkey will make no difficulty. The press here so far as they have had time to express an opinion congratulate M. Isvolsky on having found at a critical moment a most satisfactory solution. It will do his position with the public much good, and there will be general satisfaction that Russia was able to extricate Bulgaria and Turkey from a difficult situation.

⁽¹⁾ [*c. supra*, pp. 581-2, No. 542.]

No. 551.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.*Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

St. Petersburg, February 2, 1909.

I am all in favour of the Russian proposals.

Turkey is suspicious, and it will be desirable that, in case of need, Isvolsky should reassure the Grand Vizier that the question of the Straits is not going to be forced upon him inopportunistically as a result of this agreement.

The Turks, naturally, will not understand why Russia is putting her hand into her own pocket, unless it be to get something out of the Turks later on.—I suppose that the real reason for Russia's action is that she wishes to detach Bulgaria from Austria and attach her to Russia.—I should be very glad to see Isvolsky's personal position strengthened by any credit he can get out of these Near Eastern negotiations. . . .⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,
E. GREY.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]⁽²⁾ [The rest of this letter refers to Servian and Montenegrin affairs.]

No. 552.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 4588/26/09/44.

(No. 45.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 2, 1909.

I told the Turkish Ambassador to-day that I was strongly in favour of the acceptance of the Russian proposal for the settlement of the difference between Turkey and Bulgaria.

I understood the Russians were prepared to arrange that Turkey should get at least 120 million francs, and I saw not the faintest prospect of getting more than 100 million francs for her in any other way. To get even this smaller sum direct from Bulgaria would require the united pressure of all the Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [Also to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 52.]

From a telegram I had received from Sir Gerard Lowther, it appeared that the Grand Vizier suspected that the Russian proposal involved, in some way, the question of the Straits. As the Ambassador knew, this question had been discussed when M. Iswolsky was here last October. We had at that time deprecated its being raised with Turkey during the present complications, and M. Iswolsky had agreed not to press it then. Since last October, the question of the Straits had not even been mentioned.

The Ambassador asked me whether I really thought that Turkey might accept this proposal without finding herself involved in subsequent difficulties with Russia.

I told him I was sure she might. The Russian proposal stood by itself. It would receive our support and that of other Powers as a clean bargain, on its own merits, and I did not see how any other construction could be placed upon it afterwards.

I went on to tell the Ambassador that I believed the key to Russia's real motive in putting forward this proposal by itself was to be found in M. Iswolsky's speech in the Duma: in which he had said that he desired to see the Balkan States keep together and establish friendly relations with Turkey. If Bulgaria were to be drawn to the Austrian side, this desire would be defeated. Russia wished to attach Bulgaria to herself, to have her on the same side as Servia and Montenegro, and to ensure peace with Turkey. Had the proposal been adopted that the Powers should fix the amount which Bulgaria should pay, we ourselves should have suggested 120 or 125 million francs. Russia might have supported us, or at any rate have suggested 100 million francs. But Austria might have taken advantage of the situation to win over Bulgaria to her side by suggesting some smaller sum.

The Ambassador pointed out to me that under the Russian proposal Turkey would be relieved of annual payments, but would have to find cash down for the Railway, and would incur loss by doing so.

I said this was a detail which, I thought, need not prevent Turkey from accepting the proposal in principle and pressing for some arrangement by which this difficulty would be overcome. I should certainly never have supported the proposal had I not thought it better than the attempt to get Bulgaria to pay 100 million francs cash down.

The Ambassador then gave me to read the enclosed communication from his Government.⁽²⁾ though he remarked that it was now rather late.

The Ambassador pointed out again that it was impossible for Turkey to accept terms unless Bulgaria ceased to mobilise and disbanded the troops which had been called up.

I told him that, of course, if there was a settlement, Bulgaria would counter-order mobilisation: but in offering to accept the Russian proposal Turkey could make her acceptance conditional on this.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(²) [Not reproduced.]

No. 553.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, February 3, 1909.

F.O. 4598/26/09/44A.

D. 5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 5.)

R. 6.20 P.M.

Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that the Bulgarian Government have recently been making advances to Servia asking that the latter should at once recognize Bulgarian independence, and offering in return a general Agreement for mutual defence. They have hinted that the terms they propose for this Agreement

will show that Bulgaria has no secret understanding with Austria-Hungary,⁽¹⁾ but they insist that unless Servian recognition precedes that of Great Powers it will be of little value.

Minister for Foreign Affairs fears to wound Turkish susceptibilities by consenting, and seems to suspect a trap.

He begged me to ask your opinion of this proposal.

⁽¹⁾ [A subsequent telegram No. 6 of February 5 explains that the approach was made by M. Tošev, the Bulgarian Agent, "entirely on his own initiative."]

No. 554.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, February 3, 1909.

F.O. 4596/26/09/44A.

D. 7.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 31.) Confidential.

R. 10.55 P.M.

My telegram No. 30.⁽¹⁾

I inquired of Baron Aehrenthal to-day whether he thought that there was any real danger of war breaking out between Turkey and Bulgaria. He replied with a smile that he was not alarmed on this account. For him it was all clever bluff on the part of Bulgaria. By mobilizing a division Turkey was frightened into abandoning idea of rectification of frontier, and now, by loud talk of war at Sophia, impecunious Russia had suddenly devised a scheme for providing pecuniary indemnity for Turkey. From his whole tone I saw Baron Aehrenthal was greatly irritated with Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs. Turkish Ambassador said to me that he would not be surprised if Baron Aehrenthal would not try to do Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs a bad turn over Servia if latter gets credit for (having) arranged Turco-Bulgarian difficulty.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 555.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, February 3, 1909.

F.O. 4617/26/09/44A.

D. 7.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 32.)

R. 8.40 P.M.

Servia.

I inquired of Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day what was the news from Servia. He said that he saw no improvement in that quarter, and that her demands seemed to him as preposterous as they had ever been. To-day I found him much irritated against Servia, and he said to me that it might not be long before Austria-Hungary lost her patience.

No. 556.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 5111/26/09/44A.

Sophia, D. February 3, 1909.

(No. 12.)

R. February 3, 1909.

Sir,

In spite of the statements previously made by the Government's organs in the Press that a demand for territorial compensation, on the part of Turkey, would be regarded as an act of provocation, the news of the mobilisation of the Eighth Division took everybody at Sofia by surprise.

In reply to an interpellation, addressed to the Government in the Sobranie, the Minister for Foreign Affairs stated that the question of a rectification of the frontier had been suddenly raised by Turkey and that not only had some of the Ambassadors at Constantinople been approached on the subject but disquieting reports had also been received of the movement of troops in the Adrianople Vilayet. The Government would, therefore, have been wanting in their duty to the country had they not taken measures of a precautionary character. It was, General Paprikoff concluded, for the Chamber to appreciate and approve what the Government had done and, by this mark of their confidence, to encourage them to safeguard national interests. . . .⁽¹⁾

In consequence of some of my Colleagues not having received the necessary instructions, the joint representations proposed by M. Izvolsky had been unavoidably delayed. I, therefore, thought it advisable to call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs on the 29th of last month and to warn His Excellency that, unless Bulgaria abstained from all further military measures and from all acts of provocation, the efforts of the Powers to arrange a satisfactory settlement of the question of compensation would be frustrated. It could not, I said, be expected that Turkey would yield to a display of force on the part of Bulgaria and it was, therefore, most necessary that the latter should refrain from anything that could be regarded in the light of a menace.

General Paprikoff said that he quite understood this and assured me that nothing further would be done at present. The Government would, however, have to take their final decision before the expiration of the three weeks, for which the Reservists had been called out for military training and a prompt settlement of the question was, therefore, indispensable. I told His Excellency that it would be hopeless for the Powers to try to induce Turkey to accept 82,000,000 Francs and that, unless the Bulgarian Government were bent on provoking a war, they must offer more liberal compensation. Though General Paprikoff avoided saying anything definite on the subject, I carried away the impression that the Government would be prepared to pay 100,000,000 Francs if the Powers were in a position to guarantee them a speedy Recognition of Independence.

In the Balkans, however, it is always the unexpected that happens and the solution of the question of compensation, now proposed by M. Izvolsky, will, if accepted by Turkey, extricate the Bulgarian Government from their embarrassing position on the most advantageous and un hoped for terms. The Russian proposals were communicated to the President of the Council and the Minister for Foreign Affairs by the Russian Agent on the 31st of last month and were supported on the following day by the French Agent and myself. The Bulgarian Government, M. Malinoff informed us, gratefully accepted them in principle, on the condition that they were also accepted by Turkey with the least possible delay. In the course of our conversation His Excellency repeatedly insisted on this point, observing that a definite understanding on the subject must be arrived at before the Sobranie separated on the 14th of this month, in order that the Government might obtain the necessary Parliamentary sanction for the financial obligations, which the proposed arrangement with Russia would involve. By that date, moreover, the question would have to be decided whether the Government ought to demobilize the Eighth Division or order a General Mobilization of the Army. His Excellency even went so far as to express the personal opinion that, if Turkey were to reject the solution now suggested, the Bulgarian army would cross the frontier. On certain points, on which the Russian Note was not quite explicit, M. Malinoff made reservations, which my Russian Colleague, however, assures me, are of no material importance. His Excellency also enquired whether the Porte had been sounded beforehand by our respective Governments, as he seemed rather to suspect that there was something behind the Russian proposals, which he could not fathom. We, therefore, assured him that, though those proposals would be supported by the French and British Ambassadors at Constantinople, they had not been communicated to the Ottoman Government in advance.

As the German Agent was yesterday authorized by his Government to co-operate

⁽¹⁾ [Here follows a long and detailed account of the internal situation.]

with his Colleagues in making joint representations, in the sense of your Telegram No. 22 of the 28th ultimo,⁽²⁾ the Representatives of the six Powers made an identic communication this evening to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, of which I have the honour to inclose the text. General Paprikoff, in reply, said that the military measures, to which we had called his attention, were of a purely precautionary character and were devoid of any aggressive designs against Turkey, with whom Bulgaria desired to live on good and neighbourly terms. The Reservists, His Excellency trusted, would be disbanded as soon as M. Izvolsky's latest proposals had been accepted by Turkey. General Paprikoff, in conclusion, assured me that the Bulgarian Government greatly appreciated the efforts made by the Powers to effect a peaceful settlement of the questions at issue between Turkey and Bulgaria.

I would only add that the solution of the question of compensation, proposed by M. Izvolsky, will, while averting the danger of war, enable Russia to re-establish her influence in Bulgaria and to regain the ground which she has lately lost to Austria-Hungary. By the war of 1877 Russia liberated Bulgaria from Ottoman rule and, by once more coming to her assistance in this crisis of her history, she is now giving the finishing touch to that act of emancipation by smoothing the way to the attainment of complete Independence.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

Enclosure in No. 556.

Identic Communication by the Representatives of the Six Powers to General Paprikoff.

Les mesures militaires entreprises sur la frontière turco-bulgare ne pouvaient qu'entraver au détriment des intérêts des deux pays les efforts des Puissances en vue d'amener une entente amicale entre la Turquie et la Bulgarie; les Puissances accueilleraient favorablement toute combinaison apte à faciliter l'entente, mais elles estiment que toute question de rectification de frontière en faveur de l'une ou de l'autre partie devrait être entièrement écartée, vu qu'une pareille éventualité ne pourrait qu'envenimer les rapports turco-bulgares et compromettre la situation générale; enfin il est indispensable pour le succès des négociations en cours que la Bulgarie, de même que la Turquie, s'abstiennent de toutes mesures qui pourraient être interprétées dans le sens d'une provocation.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 579, No. 538, note (1).]

No. 557.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 5274/26/09/44.

(No. 28.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 3, 1909.

I told Count Metternich to-day that I had expressed myself strongly in favour of the Russian proposal for settling the difficulty between Turkey and Bulgaria.

He asked me whether I had yet heard how the Turkish Government had received the proposal.

I told him that as far as I knew the Russian Government had not yet formulated their proposal in detail or put it before the Turkish Government in such a way as to enable them to reply.

Count Metternich said he supposed the Turkish Government would want something in cash.

I told him they would clearly want some cash in order to pay the railway claim. But this was a detail which, I assumed, could be arranged with the Russian Government, and I hoped the Russian proposal would be accepted in principle.

Count Metternich did not give me any reason to suppose that the Russian proposal would be unfavourably received anywhere, or would be unsuccessful.

[I am, &c.]

E. G. [REY].

MINUTE.

Also to Sir F. Cartwright and to Sir R. Rodd to explain the despatches sent to them.

E. G.

No. 558.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 6049/26/09/44A.

(No. 83.)

St. Petersburg, D. February 4, 1909.

Sir,

R. February 15, 1909.

I had not mentioned to M. Iswolsky the fears of the Ottoman Government in regard to the possibility of His Excellency bringing forward some political questions, such as that of the Straits, in connection with his proposals for settling the pecuniary compensation due by Bulgaria to Turkey, as my information up to last evening was only based on a confidential conversation between the Grand Vizier and Sir G. Lowther. I did not, therefore, feel myself justified in referring to the matter. But on receipt of your telegram giving the substance of a conversation with Rifaat Pasha, and in compliance with your wishes, I wrote to M. Iswolsky warning him of the doubts which prevailed in the minds of some Ottoman personages. I have the honour to enclose a copy of his reply.

The Turkish Ambassador came to see me this afternoon and said that M. Iswolsky had given him most positive assurances that he had not the slightest intention of raising any political question, but wished to keep his proposals strictly within the limits of a purely financial transaction. Turkhan Pasha told me that he had telegraphed last night to his Government urging them to agree to the Russian proposal which he was convinced represented an honest and disinterested desire to preserve the peace and arrange all differences.

Turkhan Pasha thought it extremely probable that his Government would make the withdrawal of the Bulgarian troops from the frontier a condition of their acceptance of the Russian project, as Turkey could not finally agree to terms in face of what was in the nature of a menace. He told me that he had found M. Iswolsky preoccupied with the Austrian attitude which was unfriendly to the Russian proposal: but he thought that as His Majesty's Government were warmly supporting the arrangement suggested by M. Iswolsky, Kiamil Pasha would not listen to advice in a contrary sense.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

Enclosure in No. 558.

M. Isvolski to Sir A. Nicolson.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

St. Pétersbourg, 22 janvier/4 février, 1909.

J'ai chargé hier par le télégraphe M. Zinoview d'assurer le Grand Vézir que nous n'avions *nullement* l'intention de soulever, à l'occasion de notre proposition financière, une question politique quelconque, notamment la question des détroits. J'ai fait une communication analogue à la presse par l'Agence de St. Pétersbourg. M. Zinoview me télégraphie que notre proposition sera discutée aujourd'hui par le Cabinet Ottoman lequel, d'après ses informations, a demandé l'opinion des banquiers. J'attends avec impatience et inquiétude le résultat final.

Votre sincèrement dévoué,

(Signé)

ISWOLSKY.

No. 559.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, February 6, 1909.*

F.O. 5022/26/09/44A.

D. 11:35 A.M.

Tel. (No. 56.)

R. 12:20 P.M.

I met M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] for a moment last night. He said that his news from Constantinople "was not so bad." Russian Ambassador had communicated proposal to M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] who had thanked him for the communication. I understood that the Ambassador was to see Grand Vizier later. Impressions of the Russian Ambassador were not unfavourable. I told Russian M[inister for] Foreign A[ffairs] that you had again strongly advised Grand Vizier to accept Russian proposal and pointed out clearly to him the eminent desirability of his doing so. Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] is most grateful for hearty and loyal support which he is receiving from H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment].

No. 560.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 4598/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 6, 1909.

Tel. (No. 13.)

D. 2:35 P.M.

Y[ou]r Tel[egram] No. 5.⁽¹⁾

The Servian Gov[ernment], not being a Signatory of the Treaty of Berlin, are best able to judge whether acceptance of the Bulgarian advances would be to their advantage or not. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] are in favour of rapprochement between the Balkan States as well as between the Balkan States and Turkey, but they cannot give advice on the present proposal.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 587-8, No. 553.]

No. 561.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 4882/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, February 6, 1909.

Tel. (No. 82.)

D. 4:15 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 37.⁽¹⁾

I am glad to hear from you that several members of the Cabinet to whom you have spoken appear now to regard Russian proposal with less disfavour. To wreck it would be extremely foolish in their own interests.

If the Porte were so shortsighted as to refuse the Russian offer they would certainly throw Russia on to the side of Bulgaria which she was not before. They would defeat the prospect of a settlement, paralyse the efforts for peace of those Powers who are really their friends, and forfeit the goodwill of public opinion. They would then have to accept the sum of 82 million francs as there is no chance now of getting the Powers to put pressure on Bulgaria to obtain a large sum as compensation. This would not prevent the money being found by Russia.

It is foolish to suppose that a yearly payment of interest to Russia will put Bulgaria in political leading strings. She grows more independent every year and, rather than become subservient to Russia, would herself raise a loan and pay off the debt. The Turkish Gov[ernment] should beware of insidious advice from false friends.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced as tenor is indicated.]

The impression, which you say is general, that Bulgaria is bluffing is, according to my information and in my opinion, entirely wrong. The strain and losses caused by the prolonged uncertainty of the situation are very great and the Prince's naturally peaceful tendencies no longer count. If there is undue delay in accepting this proposal in principle it is quite possible that the military party in Bulgaria may gain the upper hand and action be taken which would render immediate compliance by Turkey or war inevitable.

I have spoken to the Turkish Ambassador in this sense and you should use similar language to the Grand Vizier.

Repeated to St. Petersburg (No. 147), Paris (No. 96), Berlin (No. 19), Rome (No. 49), Vienna (No. 40), Sofia (No. 39), February 6, 1909.

No. 562.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 5741/29/06/44.

(No. 77.)

Sir,

Pera, D. February 6, 1909.

R. February 12, 1909.

The Russian Ambassador only yesterday afternoon communicated to the Grand Vizier the Russian proposal for the settlement direct with Turkey of their claims against Bulgaria on the basis of 120,000,000 francs to be furnished by the abandonment by Russia of the annual payment on account of war indemnity for a sufficient number of years to provide that sum.

The Cabinet immediately deliberated on the question and sat until midnight.

I had the honour to telegraph this morning the substance of this⁽¹⁾ decision and I beg now to transmit a copy of the French version of the reply sent by the Porte to the Turkish Ambassador in St. Petersburg this afternoon.⁽²⁾

While in it the Porte do not definitely accept the proposal in principle they come forward with a counter proposal to the effect that the war indemnity for all time should be abandoned by Russia and that by this means all Bulgarian claims⁽³⁾ would be settled.

It is to be regretted that the Porte in their reply revived the original claims against Bulgaria of £T. 28,000,000, and their other complaints against Bulgaria.

Mention is made of the sum of 150,000,000 francs as a fair figure for a basis of settlement.

The indemnity of £T. 350,000 is still due for 74 years. The Turkish Note arrives at the sum of £T. 6,500,000 as the capitalized value of this annual payment; this is apparently taken at between 5% and 6%; reduced to francs this would mean 149,500,000. If then the Russian offer of 120,000,000 were accepted Turkey should properly reimburse to Russia the sum of 29,500,000. If however the maximum sum mentioned in the Turkish Note were accepted by Russia the capitalized value of the indemnity would almost exactly cover the sum claimed.

The figures are necessarily approximate as it is impossible to state exactly what would be the capitalized value of the indemnity.

My Russian colleague expressed himself as very much dissatisfied with the contents and tone of the Turkish reply and declared that he had no concern with any figures outside the proposal of his Government which the Turkish Government must either accept or refuse.

I endeavoured in company with my French Colleague to explain to Monsieur Zinoview that the difference between the Russian offer and the Turkish counter

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal note " ? which decision."]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽³⁾ [Over this is written in ink " ? claims against Bulgaria."]

proposal was not so very wide and pointed out to him that it was almost inevitable that the Turkish Government should put forward their case against Bulgaria in the strongest way possible and make an attempt to obtain the most favourable terms.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

No. 563.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Sophia, February 9, 1909.

F.O. 5469/26/09/44A.

D. 1:39 P.M.

Tel. (No. 29.)

R. 2:35 P.M.

As there seems reason to hope that negotiations proceeding at Constantinople may soon be brought to a successful termination my French and Russian colleagues and I think it would be to the interests of our Gov[ernmen]ts were they to concert beforehand in the matter of recognition. We would venture to submit following to their consideration :

1. When once Russia has obtained Turkey's consent to the Proclamation of Independence the Agents of the three Powers should notify on the same day to Prince Ferdinand and the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t the recognition by their respective gov[ernmen]ts of the independence of the kingdom of Bulgaria.
2. This done, His Britannic Majesty, the Emperor of Russia and the President of the Republic would address telegrams of personal congratulation to the King of Bulgaria.
3. The latter would next have to notify his intention of appointing Envoys Extraordinary and Ministers Plenipotentiary at London, Paris and St. Petersburg while the three Agents would receive new letters of credence accrediting them in a similar capacity at Sofia or would be replaced by others.

As it will be to Russia supported by Great Britain and France that Bulgaria will owe recognition we think that the three gov[ernmen]ts should not let other Powers forestall them in notifying it to Prince Ferdinand.

Repeated to Paris (No. 100), St. Petersburg (No. 161), February 9, 1909.

No. 564.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 5469/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 9, 1909.

Tel. (No. 101.)

D. 6 P.M.

Sir G. Buchanan's tel[egram] No. 29 (of Feb[ruary] 9).⁽¹⁾

I quite agree that other Powers should not forestall us in recognition of Bulgarian Independence, but if we three separately and before the others recognize Bulgaria, Germany will be entitled to recognize annexation of Bosnia without consulting us and Austria will at once claim that annexation of Bosnia should be recognised without further discussion of a Conference. Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs has hitherto contended that settlement between Austria and Turkey was not to involve recognition of annexation of Bosnia without discussion by the Powers. His

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

ground for this contention will be much impaired if settlement between Turkey and Bulgaria is followed by recognition of independence by some of the Powers without consultation with the others and his power of sustaining Servian and Montenegrin interests will be weakened.

There is however no objection on our part to recognition of Bulgarian Independence as soon as Turkey's consent is given; but for reasons given above I would suggest that Germany Austria and Italy should be invited to join simultaneously. Unless this is done we shall be exposed to charge of altering Treaty of Berlin without consent of other Treaty Powers, the very thing which we have reprobated in the action of Austria.

It is true that Austria may make conditions as to recognition of Bulgarian Independence, but if so the onus of delaying it will be upon her. It may then be remembered also that she herself proposed recognition of Bulgaria directly after declaration. You can explain these views to ^{Russian} French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] and note his opinion.

[Also] to St. Petersburg (No. 162). Repeated to Sophia (No. 42), February 9, 1909.

No. 565.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 5686/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, February 9, 1909.

Tel. (No. 43.)

D. 9 P.M.

Bulgarian Agent informs me that Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t has decided to disband reserves recently called up. I have expressed great satisfaction as demobilization in Bulgaria must facilitate negotiations now proceeding between Russia and Turkey which would have been imperilled by a continuance of Bulgarian mobilization.

No. 566.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 3191/26/09/44A.

(No. 9.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 9, 1909.

I have received your despatch No. 7 of Jan[uary] 18,⁽¹⁾ in which you report the suggestion which you offered to Count Forgach for a possible means of finding some compensation for Servia.

I shall be interested to hear whether Count Forgach reverts to the subject and whether he thinks it might be useful to sound the Servian Gov[ernmen]t as to their views.

You will of course keep y[ou]r Russian colleague informed.

While ready to do anything we can to promote an agreement it would be undesirable for us to make any suggestions to the Servians without being assured beforehand that they would be acceptable to both the Austrian and Russian Gov[ernmen]ts, nor do I think it would be desirable for us to attempt to intervene with suggestions to the Servian Gov[ernmen]t unless this was distinctly desired by the Powers more directly concerned. Otherwise in the event of failure the motive of such suggestions would be misconstrued.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 567-8. No. 520.]

I take this opportunity of expressing my approval of y[ou]r conduct of H[is] M[ajesty's] Legation during the present crisis.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 567.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 13, 1909.

F.O. 5978/26/09/44A.

D. 5.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 69.) Confidential.

R. 9.45 P.M.

M. Isvolsky is seriously alarmed at the official communiqué which has been telegraphed from Berlin as to what passed at the recent meeting.⁽¹⁾ Communiqué states that in the Near East there is a complete understanding between Great Britain and Germany. He says this means Great Britain has joined Germany and Austria in Near Eastern policy. France has come into better relations with Germany, and Russia has been isolated. Simultaneously with this he learns, from information from a good source, which is (?decidedly) confirmed by threatening attitude towards Servia adopted both by Austrian and Hungarian press, that Austria intends to present shortly an ultimatum to Servia, which, if not obeyed, will be probably followed by a punitive expedition, or execution, as it is termed. He is quite certain that very shortly this will occur, and that Austria is now convinced that only Russia will object to it.

I told him as categorically as possible that I was convinced he had misinterpreted meaning of communiqué, that I was quite sure His Majesty's Government had no intention of deserting Russia, and would always wish to co-operate with her in South-Eastern affairs, and that I believed that in reality Germany was gradually ranging herself alongside those Powers who wished for a peaceful settlement of all Balkan questions, and was, as far as possible, disengaging herself from the adventurous policy of Baron von Aehrenthal.

He said he could not admit view. When in Berlin he had asked that it should be announced that Germany and Russia had similar views as to Balkan affairs, and this had been refused, as it was said Berlin must march with Vienna. I said this occurred some months ago, and much had changed since. He said German Ambassador was almost daily impressing on him that Germany held close to Austria, and now it was officially and publicly announced that Great Britain was entirely at one with Germany, and so the trio was complete. He did not see how the communiqué could be explained otherwise. The first and immediate consequence was that Austria was now preparing to administer a lesson to Servia, and I could imagine in what a position Russia would find herself placed. I endeavoured to convince him to the contrary, but he relied on communiqué. He is much disturbed, and I should be glad of some further explanation to give him.

⁽¹⁾ [For a telegram of the Emperor William II to the Emperor Francis Joseph of February 12 on this visit, v. *G.P.* XXVI, II, p. 598, and references in note, and p. 597, n. For Sir C. Hardinge's account of the interview, v. *infra*, pp. 608-9.]

[ED. NOTE.—The following private letter from Sir C. Hardinge (Carnock MSS.) replies to the above.

Sir Charles Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, February 16, 1909.

I only returned on Saturday evening, and I received a nasty jar when I got your telegram No. 69⁽¹⁾ on Sunday morning. Although Sir Edward Grey was away in the country, I proceeded at once to draft and send to you a complete disavowal of there being any foundation for Monsieur Isvolsky's suspicions as to what took place in Berlin. It really is very trying that

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

he should, after all we have done and are doing for him, not realize the loyalty of our attitude. I enclose to you an account of my interview with Bülow,⁽²⁾ which was written in Berlin. From it you will see that nothing passed that could in any way be interpreted as disloyal to Russia. All that I found was a community of interests with Germany in her desire for the preservation of peace in the Balkans and the maintenance of the *status quo*. Bülow's disapproval of Aehrenthal's procedure was most marked, and I left with the impression that Bülow would, under certain circumstances, act with France and ourselves in the Near East, and proceed in conformity with Anglo-French and Russian views.

The information which we received yesterday from both Cambon and Poklewski as to Austrian intentions towards Serbia has made us very apprehensive. As we feel that we cannot leave things to chance, we are taking the initiative in proposing to act with France as mediators in this conflict. I am not very hopeful as to the result, owing to the inflated demands of Serbia and Montenegro and the stinginess of Aehrenthal. It will also be interesting to us to know whether, under these circumstances, Isvolsky will be willing that we should invite the co-operation of Germany, and so test the value of Bülow's professions to me. If Bülow should refuse to join with France and ourselves, then we shall know exactly where we are. If, on the other hand, he agrees to act with us, there is no doubt that Germany will carry more weight at Vienna than either France or ourselves. If we can only begin a discussion of the Servian and Montenegrin claims, I think it may be possible to avoid hostile action by Austria. Unfortunately, she has throughout treated Russia and the Russian army as negligible quantities; we hear the same on all sides. The next few days will show what the results of our initiative will be.⁽³⁾

Y[ou]rs ever,
CHARLES HARDINGE.]

(2) [*v. infra*, pp. 608-9, *Ed. note.*]

(3) [The rest of this letter deals with Anglo-Russian relations in Persia and Afghanistan.]

No. 568.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 5978/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 14, 1909.

Tel. (No. 187.)

D. 4 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 69.⁽¹⁾

You may assure M. Isvolsky that nothing passed in Berlin⁽²⁾ to justify the interpretation placed by him on the statement published by Reuter's correspondent.

Prince Bulow showed clearly that, while withholding his approval of Baron Aehrenthal's mode of procedure in recent events, he is sincerely anxious for the preservation of peace in the Balkans and that he had already some weeks ago given moderating advice at Vienna in this sense.

He expressed his satisfaction at the impending solution of the Bulgarian difficulty and his firm desire to maintain the reformed administration in Turkey. In these pacific aims the German Gov[ernmen]t appear to be in complete accord with the policy of the British and Russian Governments.

He discussed the question of what compensation could be offered to satisfy Serbia and suggested a more favourable Treaty of Commerce with Austria and railway facilities to the Adriatic.

He stated that he learnt from Vienna that the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t were becoming exasperated by the provocative attitude of the Servian Gov[ernmen]t, and that even the Emperor was losing patience. He expressed his anxiety that, in the event of Servian bands crossing the frontier and Austria being forced to take punitive measures, guarantees should be given by Austria that the independence of Serbia would be respected, lest the situation should become one of extreme difficulty for Russia and of danger to peace.

He further expressed the opinion that the Conference should meet as soon as an agreement had been come to by the Powers on the Servian and Montenegrin questions.

From this résumé of what passed you will see that there is no foundation whatever

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 596, No. 567.]

(2) [*cp. G.P. XXVI, II, p. 598 and n.*]

for the suspicions of M. Isvolsky and you may reassure him most emphatically that there will be no modification whatever in the policy of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] which is based on close cooperation with Russia and that they will continue to give him their full diplomatic support in assuring a peaceful solution of the Balkan questions.

The impression gained at Berlin was that there has been some change in German views which now coincide more with those of England France and Russia than with those of Austria, but you may affirm to M. Isvolsky that should this impression be mistaken we shall rally to the side of Russia and France in the Near Eastern questions.

No. 569.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Pera, February 14, 1909.

F.O. 5985/325/09/44.

D. 8.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 52.)

R. 9.40 P.M.

Hussein Hilmi appointed Grand Vizier. None of members of Committee who actually led movement against Grand Vizier are likely to take office, but Cabinet will practically be constructed by Committee, which is suggesting Ambassador in London for Foreign Affairs, thinking they will thus conciliate Great Britain.

Principal cause of complaint against late Grand Vizier is his unceremonious dismissal of Minister of War, who was closely allied to Committee.

No. 570.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 7956/26/09/44A.

(No. 109.)

St. Petersburg, D. February 14, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 1, 1909.

Monsieur Isvolsky, at my interview with him yesterday, said, somewhat bitterly, that it appeared that His Majesty's Government were in complete accord with Germany in regard to Near Eastern affairs, and that, consequently, they were equally in agreement with Austria-Hungary. France had recently come to an arrangement with Germany as to Morocco, and, therefore Russia was now isolated, and would be unable to rely on the co-operation, as regards the Near East, of France and Great Britain. I said that I did not understand to what he was alluding. He asked if I had read the communiqué which had been published as to what had passed at the interviews between Prince Bülow and Sir Charles Hardinge.⁽¹⁾ I said that I had read a telegram on the subject in the morning papers, but there was nothing in the communiqué which had appeared to me as specially noteworthy or novel. Monsieur Isvolsky said he, of course, welcomed any improvement in the relations between Great Britain and Germany, and wished that they should be good friends; but he alluded to the passage relating to a complete agreement on Near Eastern affairs. He read me the passage from a Russian version. I told him that it seemed to me that Prince Bülow recognized therein that the policy of His Majesty's Government had been pacific and directed to the maintenance of the *status quo*; this, I thought, was a good answer to certain insinuations which at one time had emanated from Vienna that the policy of Great Britain had been quite otherwise. Prince Bülow, so far as I understood the passage, expressed his entire concurrence with this pacific policy, and this would indicate that far from Great Britain joining with Austria-Hungary it was Germany who was gradually gravitating towards those Powers who desired peace, and was

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 608-9, *Ed. note.*]

disengaging herself as far as possible from the adventurous policy of Baron d'Aehrenthal. I said, "You yourself have mentioned to me that you considered that Germany had recently exercised a moderating and pacifying influence on Austria, and that it was probably due to her advice that Baron d'Aehrenthal had abated his demands in his negotiations with Turkey and had offered a pecuniary compensation." Monsieur Iswolsky, who was a little heated, said that he did not interpret the passage in at all the same sense as I did. It distinctly stated that the two Governments were in complete accord as to Near Eastern affairs, and if they were in agreement it was self-evident that they were also in agreement with Austria. When in Berlin he had asked Prince Bülow to insert in the communiqué relative to their interviews, that the two Governments were in accord, and he had received a peremptory refusal on the ground that Germany was in accord with Austria-Hungary and not with Russia. I said this occurred months ago, and much had happened since. Then Germany had proclaimed her entire solidarity with Austria; perhaps she was not now so heartily in accord with Austrian policy. Monsieur Iswolsky said that the German Ambassador was almost daily impressing on him the complete identity of views between Germany and Austria-Hungary; and now Great Britain had ranged herself alongside of them.

I told His Excellency that I could assure him in the most categorical manner that I was perfectly sure that His Majesty's Government had not, as he expressed it, "deserted" Russia. It was, I knew full well, and I had so informed him on a previous occasion, the firm intention of His Majesty's Government to co-operate heartily and sincerely with Russia in Near Eastern affairs, and to work with her in the interest of peace. I was quite sure that he had taken an erroneous view of the meaning of the communiqué of which we had only received a telegraphic summary; and I would like to see the authentic text. He could really and with perfect confidence rely on the sincerity of His Majesty's Government. There was no intention, I was quite convinced, on the part of my Government to "desert" Russia and to fall into line with the policy of Austria-Hungary. He should really put such ideas away from his mind. I would telegraph to you what he had mentioned, and I felt confident that I would receive reassuring and explicit explanations.

Monsieur Iswolsky still maintained that his view and interpretation were correct; and he remarked that the consequences of the *rapprochement* were already apparent. "Look," he said, "at the attitude which Austria-Hungary was simultaneously with the Berlin visit adopting towards Servia." He took up the "Neue Freie Presse" and read to me several extracts. All the Austrian and Hungarian Press had suddenly and without any apparent reason started a violent campaign against Servia, who was remaining quite tranquil. Information which he had received from other sources and on which he could rely convinced him that Austria intended very shortly to launch an ultimatum to Servia, to be followed by a "military execution." "What had Servia done to provoke this sudden warlike attitude? Absolutely nothing. It was clear that Baron d'Aehrenthal felt assured that neither France nor Great Britain would move, or raise any objections, and he probably counted on the absolute isolation of Russia." Consider in what position he (Monsieur Iswolsky) was now placed. He was deserted by those on whom he relied; and he could not possibly foretell what Russian public opinion might force the Government to do if Austria-Hungary carried out her threats against Servia. He could not possibly dissociate the action or the threatened action of Austria-Hungary from the "close agreement" now arrived at between Germany and Great Britain as to Near Eastern affairs. It was more than a coincidence; the two were closely connected. Austria had always announced that her preparations would be ready by March 1st. We were within a fortnight of that date, and now the preliminary menacing warning had been issued, coinciding with an official and public declaration that Germany and Great Britain were in complete accord with each other, and consequently with Austria-Hungary.

Monsieur Iswolsky proceeded for some time in this strain, and I could not induce him to believe that he was building a fabric of combinations on very slender foundations. I daresay that when I am in a position to give him some reassuring

message direct from you he will be more reasonable on the subject. At the same time he is evidently profoundly convinced that Austria intends very shortly to administer a severe lesson to Serbia, confident that all the Powers will remain tranquil spectators; and that Russia will be placed in the alternative which he has always dreaded of having to choose between open support to Serbia or to watch with folded hands the punishment of a small Slav State by an imperious neighbour.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 571.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 15, 1909.

F.O. 6272/26/09/44A.

D. 6.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 75.)

R. 8 P.M.

Your telegram No. 187.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky is much gratified with and much obliged for your frank assurances, and wishes to express his sincerest thanks.

He is quite convinced of the loyalty of His Majesty's Government.

But he views the situation with the gravest possible alarm.

Russian Chargé d'Affaires will doubtless communicate to you a telegram which M. Isvolsky has sent to Paris.

He impressed on me that he was absolutely convinced that Austria as soon as she had settled affairs with Turkey would take measures against Serbia; and in that case he would not answer for the attitude which the Russian Government might be compelled to adopt. Unless Austria was prevented from carrying out her long prepared designs against Serbia a situation would arise full of the most serious consequences to the peace of Europe. I said that Germany might be asked to say some firm words at Vienna to prevent Baron Aehrenthal from carrying out his plans. M. Isvolsky doubted if Germany would be disposed to say those words.

I told him that Prince Bülow was most anxious for peace and for maintenance of *status quo*, and I gave him verbally and confidentially substance of your above-mentioned telegram. He said that Prince Bülow repeated what the Austrian press and public men were saying, that if guarantees were given that no annexation of Serbia would take place, Russia would be contented. He wished to state most emphatically that Russia would not be contented with any assurances of that nature from Austria. If Austria advanced into Serbia there would in all probability be such an explosion here that Russia would be forced to act, and there would be a general conflagration in Europe.

He wished to impress on me that not only would there be a great movement prompted by Slav feeling in Russia, a most powerful force, but that revolutionary parties would encourage the movement in the hope of creating war, and subsequently causing troubles. Government would have to face both these motive forces, which would probably carry Government away with them.

He doubted much if Germany would insist on Austria remaining quiescent, or even advise her in that sense. In any case His Majesty's Government should understand that no guarantees and no assurances from Austria would induce Russia to sanction any inactive measures against Serbia. I said that Germany alone could speak with weight at Vienna, and as Prince Bülow had so very recently been full of pacific assurances, I did not see how he could refuse to endeavour by all possible means to preserve peace. M. Isvolsky did not believe in the sincerity of the pacific

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 597-8, No. 568.]

assurances of Prince Bülow, but seemed to agree that there would be no harm in putting them to the test.

It is impossible for me to pronounce a definite opinion as to whether Russia would or would not observe passive attitude in face of Austrian aggression on Serbia; but I could state very confidentially it would be the height of imprudence for any one to count upon her remaining passive. Question would be entirely different from that which arose in regard to annexation, and it would be most difficult for the Russian Government to regard patiently any aggressive action of Austria against Serbia.

I think that balance of probabilities would be in favour of Russia giving Serbia active support.

No. 572.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 15, 1909.

F.O. 6273/26/09/44A.

D. 7.51 P.M.

Tel. (No. 76.) Confidential.

R. 8 P.M.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs observed to me to-day that if Russia were compelled by force of circumstances to passively assist at an Austrian occupation or invasion of Serbia, it would mean the complete collapse of her present policy, and that question would of necessity arise whether she ought not to change entirely her course and abandon her alliance and *entente*. He remarked that from Berlin there had been frequent hints that Russia was steering a wrong course and making combinations which at a critical moment would prove of no value.

No. 573.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 6436/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, February 16, 1909.

Tel. (No. 191.)

D. 5.15 P.M.

You should ask whether M. Iswolsky approves the draft telegram to Cartwright which is being repeated to you.⁽²⁾

In view of statement made in your telegram No. 75⁽³⁾ that M. Iswolsky agreed that there would be no harm in putting sincerity of Prince Bulow's peaceful assurances to the test you should enquire whether he would like us to ask Germany to join with France and England in the action proposed.

It would then be desirable that M. Iswolsky should let us know what are the terms for Serbia and Montenegro, which he considers reasonable and would be prepared to advise them to accept.

⁽¹⁾ [Sent to Sir F. Bertie in Telegram No. 120 of February 16, 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [This draft telegram was eventually sent unaltered to Sir F. Cartwright as No. 53 of February 19, 1909, *v. infra*, pp. 610-1, No. 585, *v. also Ed. note* immediately below.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 600-1, No. 571.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—Telegram No. 192 from Sir E. Grey to Sir A. Nicolson, D. February 16, at 5.45 P.M., states that the draft telegram to Cartwright "has been submitted to French and Russian R[epresentative]s for the approval of their Governments." A similar telegram was sent to Sir F. Bertie, No. 121 of February 16, 1909, and later to Sir E. Goschen, No. 33, of February 18, 1909.]

No. 574.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 6594/1780/09/28.

(No. 87.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 16, 1909.

In the course of general conversation to-day, M. Cambon said it had been suggested in some quarters that Germany would now ask France for something, as a consequence of the Franco-German Agreement about Morocco, but he did not think she would do so.

It was possible, he thought, that Germany might wish to introduce herself between England and France in commercial matters in Morocco. But, in this case, it would be for England to associate herself with France and Germany in exploiting mines and in other operations of that kind in Morocco.

I told him I quite understood this. I felt that the Franco-German Agreement had removed a stumbling-block between Germany and England: for as long as Germany pursued what M. Cambon had called a policy of *taquinerie* with regard to Morocco, no matter how friendly our relations with Germany might be, they were always liable to be disturbed by disputes between France and Germany about Morocco. But if Germany abandoned this policy, and adopted a smooth one instead, this obstacle was removed.

Political weather, however, was very uncertain, and I thought it desirable to keep the *entente* between France and England as fresh and vigorous in the sunshine as it had been during the storms of the Algeiras Conference and on other occasions. At the same time, there was no reason why we should not enjoy the sun while it shone.

M. Cambon thought that Germany's desire was to consolidate her own internal politics, and to do this she required a friendly foreign policy.

If this was what Germany wished, I thought we should assist her to display a *façade d'amitié*. And for this reason I should be glad, if M. Iswolsky agreed, to see Germany join with us in negotiations at Vienna. I thought it was only if Germany would co-operate with us in advising at Vienna a policy of moderation and peace that our efforts could be made effective.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 575.

*Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.**Vienna, February 17, 1909.*

F.O. 6505/26/09/44A.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 42.)

R. 10 P.M.

Servia.

I inquired of Baron Aehrenthal whether, according to his information, there was anything new in the situation at Belgrade. He replied in the negative. He added, however, that the military preparations which Servia was rapidly making now were of a very serious character, and were giving rise to great disquietude here.

No. 576.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 7961/26/09/44A.

(No. 115.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. February 17, 1909.

R. March 1, 1909.

Monsieur Stolypine spoke to me last night in regard to the Austro-Servian difficulty, which he considered had entered upon a phase which threatened grave danger to the peace of Europe. He wished to tell me that if Austria took any active measures against Servia, he was sure that there would be such a movement in Russia, which would be warmly supported by all parties without distinction, in favour of the Government taking measures to assist Servia in resisting Austrian aggression, that it would be quite impossible for the Government to resist it. Russia would have, in that case, to mobilise, and a general conflagration would then be imminent. Such a catastrophe must be averted, and as Germany was the Power who had the greatest influence at Vienna, he trusted that His Majesty's Government would invite Prince Bülow to use his best endeavours to restrain Baron d'Aehrenthal from putting his plans into execution. M. Stolypine said he had conversed with the President of the Duma, and one or two leading men in the parliamentary parties and he found them all agreed that Russia could not possibly remain a passive spectator if Austrian troops were to cross the Servian frontier. The whole Russian press spoke with one voice in a similar sense: and therefore the gravity of the situation was apparent.

M. Stolypine made these few remarks to me with great earnestness, and as he is a man of cool calm judgment, I am convinced that he in no wise exaggerates the state of public feeling here.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 577.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 7963/26/09/44A.

(No. 118.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. February 17, 1909.

R. March 1, 1909.

On receiving your telegrams Nos. 191 and 192⁽¹⁾ relative to the steps which His Majesty's Government proposed to take at Vienna in regard to the action which it was reported that Austria-Hungary was contemplating against Servia, I called on Monsieur Iswolsky and enquired of him whether he had received any communication from Monsieur Poklewski on the subject. His Excellency replied in the negative, and I, therefore, handed him a copy of the telegram which you proposed to send to Sir Fairfax Cartwright,⁽²⁾ and which, I said, had also been communicated to the French Government. Monsieur Iswolsky read the telegram and expressed his best thanks for the communication. He had, he added, no objections to make to the terms of the proposed communication, though he would like to offer one or two observations, merely as commentaries and not in any way as suggesting amendments. He would wish to point out that according to his information, and he had just seen the Secretary to the Russian Legation at Belgrade, not only was Servia remaining perfectly quiet, but that there was not even any excitement either at Belgrade or in the country. He understood that the Servian Government were keeping in check any unruly elements; they had interned the chiefs of bands who had come over from Macedonia, withdrawn their troops from the frontier, and were patiently awaiting the results of a Conference

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 601, No. 573, and *ib. Ed. note.*]

⁽²⁾ [This was finally despatched, *v. infra*, pp. 610-1, No. 585, as No. 53 of 19 February. Sir A. Nicolson telegraphed on February 18 (No. 81), *infra*, pp. 605-6, No. 581, that Russia had concurred in its terms, and Sir F. Bertie on the same date reported the concurrence of France (No. 31), *infra*, p. 604, No. 578.]

where their requests would be considered. There had been no demonstrations at Belgrade, while he heard that the country people were quite pacific and only wished to be left alone. He noticed further that His Majesty's Government expressed their readiness to be informed of the nature of the concessions which Austria-Hungary would be prepared to make to Serbia and Montenegro. He had the greatest doubts if any concessions which Austria-Hungary would be willing to offer would be of a practical nature or at all likely to satisfy either of the above-named countries. So far as could be gathered from the statements of Baron d'Aehrenthal it would appear that the concessions would be limited to permitting Serbia to construct a railway through Bosnian territory to an Austrian port, with certain privileges as to freights, etc. Serbia had had bitter experience of the way in which Austria utilised her control over Servian trade, and the above proposed concession would be illusory since Austria, as she had done in the past, would block Servian trade whenever she thought it desirable to do so. There had been some other concessions of a trivial character, which Baron d'Aehrenthal had foreshadowed. I asked if he would kindly communicate to His Majesty's Government the terms which he considered would be reasonable to offer to Serbia and Montenegro and which he would be prepared to advise them to accept. M. Iswolsky replied that he was not at present in a position to formulate any proposals on that point. The chief object of all the European Powers should be to restrain Austria-Hungary from taking any action against Serbia. In the interests of European peace this should be the immediate aim of all the Powers.

I asked if he would like His Majesty's Government to invite Germany to join in the steps to be taken at Vienna. M. Iswolsky replied that he considered it would be most desirable that Prince Bülow should be invited to join in the proposed steps, though he was almost certain that he would decline to do so. The manner in which he received the invitation would be a test of the sincerity of his pacific professions. Of course if Germany really insisted at Vienna on the necessity of peace being preserved—and if Baron d'Aehrenthal carried out his designs peace would not be preserved—there would be some hopes of a pacific solution. But Germany, he was sure, would not speak that word. There was however no harm in endeavouring to induce her to act with the other Powers, as every effort should be made to avert the dangers which were impending. M. Iswolsky added that he understood that Russia, as being directly interested in the question, should stand aside.

I said that I gathered that this was the intention of His Majesty's Government.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 578.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, February 18, 1909.

F.O. 6666/26/09/44A.

D. 1.18 P.M.

Tel. (No. 31.)

R. 3.15 P.M.

Austria and Servia.

Your tel[egram] No. 123 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

French Gov[ernmen]t are quite willing that Italy if she wishes to join proposed representations at Vienna should be invited to do so. French M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] says it would be difficult to refuse the co-operation of the Italian Gov[ernmen]t but he thinks that it is for them to consider how such representations would be viewed by Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]. H[is] E[xcellency] is of opinion that if representations proposed by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] fail a Conference should be assembled as soon as possible for during its sittings war would be probably averted.

⁽¹⁾ Not reproduced. It suggests inviting Italy to join in representations at Vienna, if the French Government agree. A similar telegram was sent to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 198 of February 18.]

MINUTES.

We have yet to hear whether M. Isvolsky approves of Italian co-operation being invited. The French Gov[ernment] are evidently in doubt whether Italian co-operation is very desirable owing to the attitude of Italy towards Austria. There is nothing to be done at present.

C. H.

Since writing the above I have seen an advance copy of a tel[egram] from Sir A. Nicolson to the effect that M. Isvolsky wishes Italy to be invited.⁽²⁾ If action is taken it should be done through Count Bosdari tomorrow.

C. H.

Yes: do so. I have explained to Count Metternich our readiness to co-operate with Italy.

E. G.

Done.

C. H.

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, p. 605, No. 581.]

No. 579.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, February 18, 1909.

F.O. 6658/6658/09/44A.

D. 1.18 P.M.

Tel. (No. 32.)

R. 2.45 P.M.

I am informed on fairly reliable authority that an agreement has been concluded between the French Group (which was to have worked with an English group) and a German group which comprises Schwabach Bleichröder and the Deutsche Bank in regard to the financial undertakings at Constantinople.

No. 580.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 6505/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 18, 1909.

Tel. (No. 19.)

D. 6.10 P.M.

Sir F. Cartwright's tel[egram] No. 42.⁽¹⁾

Is there any foundation for the statement made by the Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]?

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 602, No. 575.]

No. 581.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 18, 1909.

F.O. 6671/26/09/44A.

D. 6.35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 81.)

R. 6.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 198.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky would be much pleased if Italy were invited to join in the action to be taken at Vienna, and especially in that which he hopes will also be taken at Berlin. He considers that it is essential that Germany should be invited to join, as if she did consent her support would be invaluable.

He asked me what was nature of procedure you propose should be followed at Vienna. Were the steps to be official and collective, or were they to be confidential

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. *v. supra*, p. 604, No. 578, note.]

separate conversations with Baron Aehrenthal? In the former case he thinks that Russian Government should join; but if the latter, then Russia might stand on one side. He considers that in the steps to be taken at Berlin Russia should associate herself. Might I have an early reply on these points?

I hope I have made it clear in recent telegrams that they are convinced here that Austria intends very shortly to attack Serbia, and that they consider that such an attack would be entirely unprovoked; also that, after my conversation with Prime Minister, and taking into consideration tone of the press of all shades, it is almost a certainty that, if Austria does attack Serbia, Russian Government will be compelled to take up arms. Situation is so critical and the consequences so portentous that I should not wish to give you any false impression by compressed language in telegrams. M. Isvolsky is most anxious that no delay should occur in taking steps both at Vienna and at Berlin, and I told him that personally I was a little uneasy lest Baron Aehrenthal might hear of the proposed mediation and forestall it by sudden action.

No. 582.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 18, 1909.

F.O. 6673/26/09/44A.

D. 7.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 84.)

R. 8.30 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has received the information that Austrian Minister of Finance is making arrangements to have ready 20,000,000L., which he told my French colleague was destined not only for action against Serbia, but also for mobilization of troops on the Russian frontier. Minister for Foreign Affairs is to see Emperor this evening, which is unusual, as he had his customary weekly audience the day before yesterday, and he has asked both my French colleague and myself to be in readiness to come to him to-night in case he wishes to see us on his return. There may be some connection between his visit to Emperor and the news from Vienna.

No. 583.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 7182/26/09/44.

(No. 42.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 18, 1909.

I told Count Metternich to-day that Prince Bülow had spoken to Sir Charles Hardinge with some anxiety as to the relations between Austria and Serbia.⁽¹⁾ Prince Bülow had feared that Austria was losing patience. I had also heard that there was the same apprehension elsewhere.

Now that the difficulties between Austria and Turkey, and between Turkey and Bulgaria, were settled in principle, it would really be too disappointing if peace were disturbed by trouble with Serbia.

Sir Charles Hardinge had asked Prince Bülow whether it would not be possible for Germany to do something at Vienna. Prince Bülow had replied that it would be difficult for Germany to act alone. I was now sending to Your Excellency, for the opinion of the German Government, a draft Telegram to Sir Fairfax Cartwright,⁽²⁾ as the best suggestion I could make.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 608-9, *Ed. note.*]

⁽²⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 610-11, No. 585.]

Count Metternich, after reading a copy of this draft which I handed to him, said the Servians were raising money for military expenditure and were arming. They had really no claim upon Austria. He was sure Austria would not attack them unless they provoked her; but he thought peace would be ensured if Serbia were definitely told that she could not expect any support from any other Power. As long as any Powers, or any one Power, went on encouraging the Servians to see what Europe would do for them, they would not keep quiet. Count Metternich considered that what was really needed was plain speaking to the Servians.

I told him that, if Austria had strong ground for complaint against Serbia, the Telegram I had suggested would enable her to raise the point, and would give us the opportunity of counselling moderation at Belgrade. The Telegram had been carefully drawn, with the object of avoiding anything which could be offensive to Austria. It had always been understood that she was willing, from the beginning of the present troubles, to modify Article 29 in favour of Montenegro and to give economic concessions to Serbia.

The state of things was such that it was not safe to let them drift; and the only way to prevent them from drifting was to bring them within the sphere of negotiations, in the hope of a settlement.

As to encouragements to Serbia, it seemed to me quite impossible for Russia to give a *carte blanche* assurance that she would under no circumstances whatever support Serbia: for this was not a question of the wishes or intentions of the Russian Government, but of the strength of the Slav feeling which might be aroused. As a matter of fact, I knew the Russian Government had already counselled moderation at Belgrade. For instance, the Servians had shown M. Iswolsky a rather uncompromising Memorandum which they proposed to send to the Powers. M. Iswolsky had urged them to postpone it, and in deference to his opinion they had put it aside for the present.

We had some further conversation about Near Eastern affairs.

In conclusion, Count Metternich again urged that the one thing needed was plain speaking to Serbia.

I said that the whole Servian question was a most delicate one, in which we must try to feel our way cautiously towards a settlement.

I also reminded Count Metternich that, at the beginning of these Near Eastern troubles, Germany had announced that she would support Austria. I had replied that we understood this, because it was what we should have done in Germany's place. Owing, no doubt, largely to the counsels of Germany at Vienna, the difficulties between Austria and Turkey had been settled in principle. As soon as this had been done, and action at Sophia and Constantinople to discourage military preparations had been proposed, I had at once suggested that Germany and Austria should be invited so that the six Powers should get into line again and act together. As regards the step at Vienna which I was now proposing, it was difficult for Russia to approach Austria direct with regard to the Servian question, for reasons which Count Metternich understood. Relations between Austria and Italy were also rather delicate at the present moment. But, as far as we were concerned, we should be happy if Italy would join with the other Powers in the proposed step at Vienna. I thought it would have an excellent effect if these four Powers were shown to be working together for peace.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following memorandum contains Sir C. Hardinge's confidential report of his interview with Prince Bülow on February 10, 1909. It was reprinted with some omissions on February 19, and circulated to the Cabinet. The omitted passages have been restored except for two. These concern personal details regarding two foreign Royalties who were not very prominent. The latter part of the memorandum is not printed here as it refers to Morocco: it will be printed with the papers on that subject in a later volume.]

Memorandum by Sir C. Hardinge.

F.O. 6767/222/09/18.

(Confidential.)

February 11, 1909.

I called yesterday evening on Prince Bülow, on his invitation, and had a long conversation with him lasting nearly an hour and a-half, of which I have endeavoured to give a summary as follows:—

Prince Bülow commenced by expressing the opinion that the situation in the Near East had assumed a more reassuring aspect now that Turkey had come to terms in principle with both Austria and Bulgaria as to the compensation she is to receive for the moral and material losses which she had suffered at their hands due to the incidents of last autumn. He wished me to understand that the whole influence of Germany is concentrated on the maintenance of peace in the Balkans, and that he had throughout the recent crisis repeatedly urged moderation both at Vienna and Sophia. He assured me that although Germany had only about one-fifth of the capital which France possesses invested in commercial and industrial enterprises in Turkey, it is just as essential to the interests of Germany that the regenerated Turkey should be maintained and strengthened as it is to the interests of both England and France. In this he saw an opening for the joint co-operation of England, Germany, and France in the Near East, to which he looked forward with hope.

Turning to the question of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he assured me that although he had heard of the project after the meeting at Buchlau, Baron Aehrenthal's intention to put it into immediate execution had come as a complete surprise to him, and that he had only learnt it at the same time as the news was communicated in London and St. Petersburg. Although he expressed his conviction that Baron Aehrenthal may have been justified by the Pan-Serb agitation in the two provinces in his decision to put an end to it by annexation, he did not disguise from me his disapproval of the methods by which Baron Aehrenthal had attained his object. It would have been so simple for the Austrian Government to have announced to the Porte that, in view of the new state of affairs prevailing in Turkey, they proposed to dispense with the guarantees which they had hitherto possessed for the maintenance of order on the frontiers of the provinces by withdrawing the Austrian troops from the Sanjak, in return for which the Turkish Government might have been willing to countenance the conversion of the occupation into definite annexation. To such an arrangement Turkey would probably have agreed, and none of the Powers would have objected. Instead of this, by his precipitate action and seemingly thoughtless procedure, Turkey had been deeply incensed, the Powers affronted, the value as a concession of the evacuation of the Sanjak thrown away, and the Austrian Government compelled in the end to pay an indemnity of 2½ millions. It had been incumbent on the German Government to support Baron Aehrenthal throughout this crisis whatever might be their feelings as to his procedure, but they had, when the opportunity presented itself, given moderating advice.

I told Prince Bülow that Sir Edward Grey had been aware of the conciliatory advice given by Germany at Vienna in connection with the payment of a pecuniary compensation at a moment when negotiations between Austria and Turkey appeared to have arrived at a complete *impasse*, and that I had been authorized to tell him that His Majesty's Government greatly appreciated the moderating influence exercised by Germany at a somewhat critical moment in Balkan affairs.

Prince Bülow warmly thanked me for this friendly message from Sir E. Grey, and remarked that, from my long personal acquaintance with Baron Aehrenthal, I must be aware of the extreme difficulty of giving him advice owing to his extreme sensitiveness, and to the fact of his realizing that his own personal position was deeply involved. He had, however, succeeded in the end in conveying to him his views without incurring his resentment. What had made the situation more difficult and complicated was the personal animosity prevailing between Baron Aehrenthal and M. Isvolsky, which rendered the position of Germany as the ally of Austria and the traditional friend of Russia a very delicate one. In spite of what M. Isvolsky might now say, there is no doubt that he had compromised himself at Buchlau, and, having miscalculated the attitude of the Russian press, had waived his objections to the annexation in the hope of obtaining definite assurances from Baron Aehrenthal on the question of the Dardanelles. In this he had entirely failed, for Baron Aehrenthal had been *rusé*, and had told him that, although Austria had no primordial interest in the question of the Straits, it was not, however, a question dependent on the Treaty of Berlin but on the Treaty of Paris, and consequently a subject for examination and discussion by all the Signatories of the Treaty of 1856. M. Isvolsky had been deeply irritated by this reply.

Prince Bülow remarked that he had been much pleased to receive the news that orders had been given by the Bulgarian Government for demobilization. He had heard from Baron Marschall

that the situation had at one moment been critical, but now that the Russian proposal had been accepted in principle, all danger of war had been happily averted. He was waiting for news as to how the Turkish counter-proposal would be received in St. Petersburg, but it was quite evident that M. Isvolsky had not realized the extent of his proposal when making it, and that he had made a serious miscalculation in thinking that the capitalization of the war indemnity for fifteen or twenty years could produce the sum of 125,000,000 fr. The Bulgarian question being no longer in an acute stage, it would now be possible to deal with the Servian and Montenegrin questions, which held now would tax the patience and ingenuity of the Powers.

I inquired of Prince Bülow whether, in his opinion, it would be possible to obtain from Austria any rectification of the Montenegrin frontier such as the cession of Spizza, and any real economic advantages for Serbia that might help to compensate her for the loss of some of her national aspirations.

Prince Bülow replied that he was convinced that Austria would not agree to any cession of territory whatever, that it would be a point of honour with the Emperor, at the end of a life full of misfortune and reverses, not to part with an inch of territory that had been acquired, and that any suggestion in that sense would be resented. It might be possible to satisfy Serbia by a more favourable Treaty of Commerce and by facilitating her export trade by a railway to the Adriatic, but he did not see what else could be done. In the meantime, it appeared from the information which he received from Vienna, that the Austrian Government were becoming exasperated by the provocative attitude of the Servian Government, and that even the Emperor was losing patience. If, in the event of Servian bands crossing the Bosnian frontier, it became necessary for the Austrian Government to undertake punitive measures against Serbia, it would be very desirable that Austria should previously declare that she would respect her independence; otherwise the situation created for Russia would be one of extreme difficulty. I added that it would be as well that the integrity of Serbia should also be respected, and asked whether Germany would, in that eventuality, make the suggestion to Austria. He replied that it would be difficult for Germany to act alone. . . .

In Prince Bülow's opinion, it is very necessary that the Conference should meet as soon as a decision has been arrived at by the Powers on the Servian and Montenegrin questions, but that a preliminary Agreement is indispensable. He had absolute confidence in the peaceful intentions of the Russian Government, who fully realize that they are quite unprepared for war, and that war could only be to the interest of the revolutionaries in Russia. As all the other Powers are equally desirous of peace, he could not bring himself to believe that they would permit the baffled aspirations of two small countries to involve them in a terrible war, which it would be difficult to restrict within narrow limits.

I asked Prince Bülow his impressions as to the possibility of a solution in the near future of the Cretan question. He replied that, in his opinion, the prospect is much less favourable now than it was some months ago, and the German Ambassador at Constantinople had informed him that the Nationalist movement amongst the Young Turk party had assumed such a strong development that any discussion of the question at present would be foredoomed to failure. The King of Greece had during the autumn done him the honour of paying him a visit, and had impressed upon him the urgent necessity of the early annexation of the island in order to stave off Ministerial difficulties in Greece, but he had done his utmost to impress upon His Majesty the advisability of patience. He had been in Greece and had known the King for a great number of years, and was himself in favour of the union, but he had been deeply impressed by the information which he had received, to the effect that the Turkish Government might, in the event of union being declared, take hostile action against Greece. . . .

CHARLES HARDINGE.

February 11, 1909.

No. 584.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 19, 1909.

F.O. 6675/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 85.)

D. 1.32 A.M.

R. 8 A.M.

M. Isvolski asked French Ambassador and myself to call on him to-night. He informed us that Prince Ferdinand had expressed a desire to attend funeral of Grand Duke Vladimir. This request could not possibly be refused and the Russian Gov[ernment] could not receive him otherwise than as king and give him sovereign honours. I told M. Isvolski that this was a complete departure from the agreement which the three powers had come to but a very few days ago; that it would greatly weaken position Russia had always assumed and that it would create a deplorable impression especially in Turkey with whom negotiations were still in progress and

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render it impossible for Russia to reproach Austria with any illegal act latter had committed. I used other obvious arguments.

M. Isvolski said that if the Prince were not received as a king it would be an affront to Bulgaria and would throw that country into the arms of Austria and would also run counter to public sentiment here. Dilemma in which Russia was placed was most difficult but the Gov[ernmen]t could not do otherwise than act as he had mentioned.

I will telegraph more at length to-morrow morning but I wish to give outline to-night of what is contemplated.⁽¹⁾

MINUTES.

The recognition of Prince Ferdinand in this way may throw H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] instead of Bulgaria into the arms of Austria: Russia cannot expect us to follow suit and such action would be a reason for not following her lead as regards Servia.

J. A. C. T.

We cannot do this without stultifying our attitude in the Bosnian question. It is unfortunate, but I think we must say so clearly. The proper course for the Russian G[overnment] to pursue would be to deprecate Prince Ferdinand's coming, but this M. Isvolsky apparently does not dare to do. If the Prince goes to St. Petersburg he might be received with the guards of honour etc. that are usually given to a Sovereign but without any formal act of recognition. I believe that at Pesth, in September, the Prince was received with the same ceremony as is customary to be observed with Sovereigns.

We can await the further telegram promised by Sir A. Nicolson.

C. H.

The less Russia does the better. She should try to avoid formal recognition. The more she does in honour of Prince Ferdinand the more she will put herself in the wrong with regard to Austria. We cannot follow suit and must just stand aside.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [For further details with respect to this incident, v. the following extract from Mr. Alwyn Parker's memorandum on the Near Eastern Crisis, July 29, 1909, p. 30 :—

" While negotiations were proceeding between Russia and Turkey, a fresh complication arose owing to an astute and well calculated move on the part of Prince Ferdinand, who expressed a desire to attend the funeral of the Grand Duke Vladimir at St. Petersburg.

The Russian Government found themselves in a grievous dilemma: they conceived that it was impossible to refuse His Royal Highness' request; that they could only receive him as a King with sovereign honours; and that any other course would be an affront to Bulgaria, and throw her into the arms of Austria, when it was imperative to detach her from that country. ' which was on the eve of invading Servia; ' moreover, the Royal honours would simply be given as a matter of courtesy, formal recognition being reserved.

His Majesty's Government, while sympathizing with the Russian Government in this dilemma, and using their good offices to moderate feeling in Turkey, declined to adopt a similar attitude, directing His Majesty's Ambassador at St. Petersburg to avoid at the funeral any position likely to compromise them. As to their own policy, as soon as a settlement with Turkey had been reached, but not before, they would be ready to concert with France and Russia in securing the recognition of independence by all the Powers."]

No. 585.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 6671/26/09/44.

Tel. (No. 53.)

Foreign Office, February 19, 1909.

D. 5 P.M.

We are very seriously disturbed by report that Austria feels she may be compelled to take active measures against Servia in the near future, and is already contemplating them. We doubt whether any assurances could induce Russia to regard such a

⁽¹⁾ [Sent as Tel. No. 65 to Sir R. Rodd with following prefixed " Following draft telegram to His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna has been submitted to French, German, and Italian Representatives for the approval of their Governments : "]

situation with equanimity, and consequences of war between Serbia and Austria might therefore be so far-reaching as to disturb the peace of Europe and involve other Powers.

We are not aware that Serbia has taken any offensive steps or given any new provocation beyond general excitement at home. We hoped she was waiting, and intended to wait, till the Powers discussed her affairs. You should explain this view to Baron d'Aehrenthal, and ask whether there is any definite action on the part of Serbia of which Austria complains, or whether she has reason to apprehend such action. In this event you should assure him that we will do our best at Belgrade, as we have done before successfully, to remove such cause of complaint, for we are most anxious, for reasons given above, to avert by every means in our power the contingency of seeing Austria compelled to take active measures against Serbia.

To secure peace it seems undesirable to delay any longer discussion amongst the Powers of what settlement can be arrived at with regard to Servian and Montenegrin interests. To initiate this discussion we would suggest that Austria should state confidentially to us what concessions she is prepared to make, for we have always understood that she is prepared to make concessions about Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin, and to offer some other advantages in addition.

You should co-operate with your French, German, and Italian colleagues in this sense as soon as they receive similar instructions.

Repeat Bucharest (No. 2), Sofia (No. 55), Belgrade (No. 22), Constantinople (No. 114).

No. 586.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 6671/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 19, 1909.

Tel. (No. 54.)

D. 5 P.M.

My immediately preceding tel[egram].⁽¹⁾

I have submitted above mentioned tel[egram] to the French, German and Italian Gov[ernmen]ts and have invited their cooperation. The French Gov[ernmen]t have entirely approved and I am waiting for replies from the German and Italian Gov[ernmen]ts, of which you will be informed as soon as they are received.

I am of opinion that the repres[entatio]ns to B[aro]n Aehrenthal should be made separately and conf[idential]ly so as to be less likely to give offence and to ensure their friendly reception. You should arrange with your Colleagues to act in this manner.

Repeat to Sofia (No. 56), Belgrade (No. 23), Bucharest (No. 3), Paris (No. 131), Berlin (No. 40), Petersburg (No. 208), Rome (No. 67), Constantinople (No. 115).

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document; also v. *supra*, p. 601, No. 573, note ⁽²⁾.]

No. 587.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 6671/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 19, 1909.

Tel. (No. 66.)

D. 5.15 P.M.

My immediately preceding tel[egram].⁽¹⁾

You should invite the cooperation of the Italian Gov[ernmen]t in the proposed repres[entatio]ns at Vienna and ask them to support at Berlin our request to the German Gov[ernmen]t to take part in it. It is desirable to act without delay.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 610-11, No. 585, and note.]

No. 588.

*Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.**Belgrade, February 19, 1909.*

F.O. 6801/26/09/44A.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 7.)

R. 6.45 P.M.

Your telegram No. 19 (Austria and Servia).⁽¹⁾

Military Attaché thinks statement is probably based on information from Austrian Military Attaché here recording fact that second (ban) cavalry reservists are undergoing training in garrison for three weeks by classes of 800 maximum. Total number of these reservists estimated at about 2,500.

This is the only measure taken by Servian military authorities that could be objected to as implying expectation of hostilities in near future. The supplies they are ordering should have been in their stores a year ago, and the training of first (ban) reservists is not more than prescribed by law. (Constitutional) peace footing of Servian army is 36,000 men; there are now 25,000 with the colours, including reservists, who are frequently changed. All the troops are in their usual peace quarters.

On the other hand, winter strength of Servian army has in recent years rarely exceeded 15,000.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 605, No. 580.]

No. 589.

*Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.**Pera, February 19, 1909.*

F.O. 6796/26/09/44.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 56.)

R. 8 P.M. [*sic*].Sir F. Cartwright's telegram No. 41.⁽¹⁾

I am inclined to think new Grand Vizier will endeavour to accelerate settlement of Austrian and Bulgarian questions even at a sacrifice in order to be able to justify his position and to show that his Government can accomplish something.

Russian Ambassador has spoken to Grand Vizier about Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs' proposal, and I understood Ambassador to say he had presented it again practically in its original form "to take or to leave."

The number of years' indemnity to be remitted would, he said, depend on calculations of Russian Minister of Finance.

There seems to be a disposition on the part of the Turkish Government to agree to proposal as it first stood.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

No. 590.

*Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.**Pera, February 19, 1909.*

F.O. 6797/26/09/44.

D. 9.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 57.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

Grand Vizier has just been to see me, and declares it is impossible for his Cabinet or any (? other) to accept Russian proposal as it stands, although accepted in principle. Something must be done to satisfy public opinion and to get rid of humiliation of payment of war indemnity.

(1) [*v. immediately preceding document*.]

This evening at a Cabinet Council following proposal was adopted, which will be submitted to Russia:—

On the security which now furnishes the £T. 360,000 a-year a loan to be raised by some bank, which, after immediate payment of 125,000,000 fr[ances] to Turkey, would engage to pay direct to Russia the annual instalment due from the date of expiration of term necessary to produce that sum, until the date at which payment of indemnity ceases.

Grand Vizier said he did not see what possible objection Russia could make to this proposal, but, in view of the somewhat uncompromising language of Russian Ambassador this afternoon, I said I would reserve my opinion till matter had been further studied, though I spoke to him on general lines in favour of prompt settlement.

No. 591.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 6436/26/09/44.

Tel. (No. 127.)

Foreign Office, February 19, 1909.

My tel[egram] No. 120.⁽¹⁾

Ask the French Gov[ernmen]t to support at Berlin our invitation given yesterday to the German Gov[ernmen]t to cooperate with us in proposed representations at Vienna.

⁽¹⁾ [Repeating Tel. No. 191 to Sir A. Nicolson, *v. supra*, p. 601, No. 573.]

No. 592.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, February 20, 1909.

F.O. 6976/26/09/44A.

D. 7.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 46.)

R. 10 P.M.

Your telegrams Nos. 53 and 54⁽¹⁾ of yesterday.

I have to-day seen my French colleague, my German colleague, (and) my Italian colleague. So far only the French Ambassador has received instructions to speak to Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs in the sense of the above-mentioned telegrams.

The French Ambassador does not think that proposed representations will lead to any practical result.

The Italian Ambassador is of a similar opinion, and doubts whether he will receive instructions from Rome to act.

The German Ambassador, who has just seen the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, informed me that his Excellency was already well aware of the step proposed to be taken by certain Powers, and gave me a hint that however tactfully proposed representations were made they were not likely to be well received, and might even do much harm.

All three Ambassadors are of opinion that if representations are made they should be addressed to the Servian Government with a view to obtaining from them some more or less official renunciation of exaggerated demands. Until Austria-Hungary is satisfied on these points she is not likely to enter into any discussion with other Powers as to economic or other concessions which she is prepared to offer to Servia.

German Ambassador found Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs perfectly calm as regards military situation, and said to me that he was quite convinced that his

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 610–11, Nos. 585 and 586.]

Excellency had no intention of moving against Serbia. He added that if Austria finally decided on punitive expedition it would be only after she had been exposed to repeated acts of violent aggression on the part of Serbia, and that, as it was understood that Austria-Hungary would declare that she would not annex any portion of Servian territory, such an expedition need not cause alarm to any of the European Powers.

I may say, however, that the German Ambassador's somewhat reassuring view of the situation is not shared by everyone here.

No. 593.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, February 20, 1909.

F.O. 6973/26/09/44A.

D. 7.35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 28.)

R. 10.20 P.M.

Your telegram No. 66⁽¹⁾ and previous telegrams.

Minister for Foreign Affairs has telegraphed to Berlin urging most strongly German co-operation in proposed representations at Vienna.

He prefers to await answer of German Government before deciding as to whether Italy should act with Great Britain and France alone, believing that action by all four Powers offers only chance of deterring Austria from a course he is convinced Baron Aehrenthal has decided on. He does not refuse to join in representations without Germany, but would prefer to reflect, situation of Italy being somewhat delicate, and because he feels assured that Austria will disregard representations of the three Powers unless she had reason to fear Great Britain and Russia will actively intervene on behalf of Serbia. I observed that there was little time for reflection, and he promised to communicate with me as soon as German reply was received.

He is greatly preoccupied, and appears convinced that Austria intends to attack Serbia and advance to Belgrade, hoping to appease Powers by informing them that she has no intention to take any Servian territory and will withdraw after inflicting a lesson.

Minister for Foreign Affairs no longer anticipates any Bulgarian co-operation with Austria.

(Repeated to Berlin and Vienna.)

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 611, No. 587, *cp.* also p. 610, No. 585, *note.*]

No. 594.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, February 22, 1909.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 7083/26/09/44A.

D. 11.20 A.M.

Tel. (No. 30.)

R. 11.30 A.M.

Austria and Serbia.

Austrian Ambassador told me last night he had received most reassuring message from Vienna which he had communicated to Italian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]. There had been never he said any question of an ultimatum to Serbia.

(¹) [Baron von Aehrenthal's views are given in a private letter to Prince Bülow of February 20, 1909. G.P. XXVI, II, pp. 610-6.]

No. 595.

*Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.**Berlin, February 22, 1909.*

F.O. 7204/26/09/44A.

D. 12.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 11.)

R. 1 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 10.⁽¹⁾

French Ambassador met Chancellor on Saturday and spoke in the same sense as to the Secretary of State. Chancellor said he felt certain that Austria had no aggressive intention but that he would much like to act with us and make assurance doubly sure. Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] was however difficult to deal with and would be sure to resent anything having even an appearance of pressure. Position therefore was very difficult. He was to see the Emperor next day and he would do his best to find some form by which he could go with us without offence.

Italian Ambassador having sudden instructions yesterday morning at once saw Secretary of State and supported Representations made on Saturday by French Ambassador and myself.

Secretary of state gave him a similar answer but added definite reply of German Gov[ernment]t would probably be of an evasive nature as they had heard from Vienna that, in a conversation with French Ambassador there, Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had already stated that the contemplated Representations would be unpleasant to him in view of positive assurances he had given that he would refrain from aggressive action unless provoked beyond endurance. Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] had also hinted his intention to open negotiations with Servia as soon as question with Turkey was settled.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. Its substance is given at greater length in Sir E. Goschen's despatch of February 26, *infra*, pp. 629-34, No. 615.]

No. 596.

*Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.**Berlin, February 22, 1909.*

F.O. 7242/26/09/44A.

D. 12.54 P.M.

Tel. (No. 12.)

R. 2.10 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 11.⁽¹⁾

I hear from usually well-informed but journalistic source that the Chancellor has suggested to the Emperor that reply to our request for German cooperation at Vienna should be in following sense: that Germany would prefer that Representations should be made at Belgrade; should assurances given there prove to be quite satisfactory the German Gov[ernment]t would not object to give friendly advice to Austria Hungary to abstain from any action towards Servia which might give rise to dangerous European complications.

MINUTES.

This might do—especially if we can get no one to support immediate repr[esentatio]ns at Vienna. See Sir F. Cartwright's No. 24 (annexed)⁽²⁾ on which I have alluded to the possibility of the four Powers saying now that Servia must not look for territorial compensation.

J. A. C. T.

R. P. M.

It is a little difficult to know what sort of representations could be made at Belgrade but the R[epresentatives] might be instructed to inform the Servian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] that maintenance of the Army on a war footing is giving rise to uneasiness in Austria as to their intentions and that the Powers would be glad to be assured that they are pacific and that there will be rigid abstention from any act of aggression.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

The Servian G[overnment]t will reply that their preparations are merely defensive etc. and then we shall get all the Powers to join in a representation at Vienna.

We shall at any rate set the ball rolling which is the important thing, but it would first be necessary to explain to M. Isvolsky, otherwise he will assume we have gone over to Germany. Await German answer.

L. M.

But the premisses of Mr. Mallet's minute are incorrect. The Servian Army is not on a war footing. Their peace footing⁽²⁾ is between 30 and 40,000 men and they have now 35,000 men with the colours. It is true that in winter they generally have only 15,000 men with the colours, but in having 35,000 men they have not exceeded their peace effective. The Servians have repeatedly told us that they will do nothing but wait for the Conference, and the fact remains that nothing has been done, except to talk loosely.

My own opinion is that we should wait for the replies of Germany and Italy, and, if they will not go in with us at Vienna, that we should then act together in the most friendly manner at Vienna, and I believe that our action would thus be less liable to misrepresentation, and would even be more effective.

C. H.

We must have the text of the German reply.

E. G.

(²) [Marginal comment by Mr. Mallet, "The *new* peace footing. L. M."]

No. 597.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, February 22, 1909.

F.O. 7264/26/09/44A.

D. 4.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 9.)

R. 8 P.M.

My Austrian colleague starts to-morrow for a week's leave, and has been instructed to go to Vienna first in order to discuss situation.

He told me yesterday that Austria would demand not only immediate cessation of military armaments, but also guarantees that the Servian Government would stop all further intrigues and propaganda in Bosnia and Croatia. He confirmed this to-day by saying that Austria would require Serbia to reverse her policy completely.

I do not think any Servian Government could yield to this demand except under pressure from all the Powers, including Russia. Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that best proof of Serbia's pacific intentions was that no steps whatsoever had been taken to remove capital from Belgrade.

(Sent to Vienna.)

[ED. NOTE.—On the 24th February a new Coalition Ministry was reconstituted in Servia, M. Novaković, President; M. Pašić, Public Works; while M. Milovanović remained Foreign Minister.]

No. 598.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Berlin, February 23, 1909.

F.O. 7272/26/09/44A.

D. 2.10 A.M.

Tel. (No. 13.) R.

R. 8 A.M.

My telegram No. 10.⁽²⁾

Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs read to me this afternoon the following document, being the reply of the Imperial Government to the representations made

⁽¹⁾ [Repeated to the Embassies and Belgrade.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. *v. supra*, p. 615, No. 595, note.]

by French and Russian Ambassadors and myself, and subsequently the Italian Ambassador, asking for Germany's support for your proposed action at Vienna:—

“By order of the Emperor, to whom the proposal of His Majesty's Government has been submitted, I have the honour to make the following reply:—

“The Imperial Government note with satisfaction that the British proposal is dictated by same desire to remove all danger of complications in Near East, and especially everything which might give rise to a conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, as that which has always animated the Imperial Government.

“As the Imperial Government are in entire accord with the pacific intentions of His Majesty's Government, it is to their great regret that they find it impossible to adhere to form of procedure proposed.

“Any action having the object of removing the differences between Austria-Hungary and Serbia should, in their opinion, be taken at Belgrade rather than at Vienna. Provocation is, in effect, all on the side of Serbia. Threats of war have found expression, both in official and in non-official circles in Serbia, though whole question is one with which country has no concern. Neither material interests nor the rights of Serbia have been altered by the fact that two Ottoman provinces which Austria-Hungary had the right to occupy for an unlimited period have been turned into an Austrian possession.

“It is difficult to understand how this fact gives to Serbia the right to compensation.

“We cannot ask Austria to make, through mediation of other Powers, advances and promises to a State which threatened and continues to threaten her with acts of hostility.

“By yielding to such a proposal, Austria-Hungary would expose herself to the appearance of having given way to external pressure.

“Austria-Hungary has declared on several occasions that she did not wish to attack Serbia. She has proved the sincerity of this declaration, and her steadfast intention of adhering to it by her long sufferance and by the imperturbability which she has hitherto retained, in spite of numerous provocations on the part of Serbia.

“Peace and order are endangered by Serbia alone, the proceedings and threats in which Serbia is pleased to indulge being alone of a nature to create a situation intolerable for the great neighbouring kingdom, and to force the latter to make use of the incontestable right of every Power to establish peace and order on her frontiers. If Serbia really desires, as she asserts she does, in spite of attitude of her Parliament and the successor to the throne, to maintain peace, there is no cause to fear a conflict.

“Austria-Hungary having even shown herself disposed to accord certain economic advantages to Serbia, the Imperial Government consider that it would be interest of the latter Powers too that steps should be taken at Belgrade to request Servian Government to guarantee that its provocative attitude will no longer be maintained, to bring its actions into conformity with its pacific assurances to the Powers, and to communicate directly with Austria-Hungary, with a view to the discussion of economic advantages which latter may be pleased to accord. Action at Belgrade would be rendered all the more efficacious if all the Powers, and particularly Russia, would participate in it.”

MINUTES.

This is the reply which was predicted by Sir E. Goschen. It is obvious from Sir A. Nicolson's No. 93 (No. 7261)⁽³⁾ that Russia will not join in any representations at Belgrade.

R. P. M.

(3) [Not reproduced. *cp.* Sir A. Nicolson's Telegram No. 97, *infra*, p. 619, No. 600.]

The reply is very uncompromising and completely disposes of the Prince Bülow assurances to Sir C. Hardinge.

One cannot avoid the inference that Austria has some surprize in preparation. We know from Mr. Whitehead's Telegrams⁽¹⁾ what Austria wants namely cessation of military preparation and certain guarantees, and a complete reversal of her policy.

It would be hopeless to suggest this at Belgrade especially without Russia.

Shall we on the other hand gain much by addressing a possibly solitary enquiry at Vienna?

Could we propose that the Austrian and Servian difference be at once referred to a Conference of the Ambassadors—say at Paris?

If nothing is done, the danger of an attack by Austria cannot be ignored.

L. M.

Our efforts to get Germany to cooperate with us and France have failed, and the proposal which Germany makes of the representations to be made at Belgrade would also fail, since Russia would not join in them, and without the cooperation of Russia they would be of no avail. In the meantime, it appears from the telegrams which reach us that the situation daily grows worse and that an ultimatum from Austria to Servia may be expected in the near future. Whatever therefore is done should be done quickly to forestall such action.

In any case I think it would be as well that a plan should be concerted with the French Gov[ernmen]t by which Sir E. Grey should impress upon Count Mensdorff and M. Pichon upon Count Kevenhüller that England and France are really apprehensive of the strained relations between Austria and Servia and of possible developments which might seriously endanger European peace. That, in approaching the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t with a view to mediation the two Gov[ernmen]ts wish to act in an entirely friendly spirit their sole object being the maintenance of peace. The two Gov[ernmen]ts are firmly convinced that the danger can only be allayed by the joint action of all the Powers at Belgrade to impose a solution upon the Servian Gov[ernmen]t which the latter would probably accept as the decision of the Powers. To secure this joint action it would be necessary to convince the Russian Gov[ernmen]t of the equitable treatment of Servia and Montenegro by the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t. The two Gov[ernmen]ts would not approach the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t in this sense were it not that Baron Achrenthal had stated in the Delegations his readiness to make certain economic concessions. If the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t were willing to inform the English and French Gov[ernmen]ts most confidentially of the extent of the economic concessions which the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t would be ready to make the two Gov[ernmen]ts would communicate them confidentially to the Russian Gov[ernmen]t and ascertain their views. This would appear to the two Gov[ernmen]ts to be the most expeditious and satisfactory mode of procedure, but in the event of the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t being for reasons of their own unwilling to adopt it, the two Powers are ready to propose to all the Great Powers the meeting of a Conference with the least possible delay to settle this and other outstanding questions.

I do not think that action of this nature would expose us to misinterpretation, and it would certainly open the door to a possible solution of the Servian question before the meeting of the Conference. Before the Berlin Conference of 1878 met solutions of all pending questions had been found, and yet there were moments during the course of the negotiations of difficulty and danger to the success of the Conference. For a Conference to meet without a solution of the Servian question having been found would be dangerous, but it would be preferable to run this risk than to allow things to drift eventually into a war of which nobody could foretell the limits.

I do not think that the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t could justifiably complain of the nature of the action which I have suggested that Sir E. Grey and Mr. Pichon should take. In any case it should convince Austria and Germany of our sincere desire for peace and of our anxiety to take any possible steps to maintain it.

C. H.

This has been dealt with by telegram to Sir E. Goschen⁽⁵⁾ and by conversations with German and Austrian Ambassadors today.

E. G.

⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 612, No. 588, and p. 616, No. 597.]

⁽⁵⁾ [*v. immediately succeeding document, cp. despatch of same date, infra*, pp. 623-4, No. 606.]

No. 599.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 7272/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 24, 1909.

Tel. (No. 48.)

D. 1 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 13.⁽¹⁾

H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t cordially reciprocate the sentiments expressed in opening sentences of German reply.⁽²⁾ The proposed procedure at Vienna would

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 616-7, No. 598.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. G.P. XXVI, II, pp. 625-7.*]

have given an opening to Austrian Gov[ernmen]t to invite the Powers to make representations at Belgrade if desired and to state on what grounds such representations should be based. It is difficult to make them effectively without knowing exactly what Serbia has done recently to endanger situation for latest information received goes to show that Servian army is not on a war footing. We agree too that action at Belgrade is hardly likely to be efficacious unless Russia participates and we doubt whether she can do so without some knowledge of terms, which Austria is likely to concede. Russia can hardly be expected to intimate to Serbia that she must place herself in hands of Austria unreservedly and not expect that any Power will give even diplomatic support to Servian interests. Under these circumstances the only hope of Powers being able to promote a settlement lies in summoning a Conference, though that solution cannot be regarded with confidence if there is no indication beforehand as to what agreement is likely or possible.

It is recognized that, if Austria is really unwilling to take other Powers into her confidence or to encourage mediation by any Power or Powers, further attempts to effect a settlement can be of no avail, but H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t regard with anxiety the consequences which may follow if the situation gets worse and leads to disturbance of peace and continue to hold themselves ready to cooperate in any procedure which is likely to prevent war and to be acceptable to the Powers most directly interested in the present difficulties.

(Repeat to Embassies and Belgrade.)

No. 600.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 24, 1909.

F.O. 7563/26/09/44A.

D. 5.50 P.M. [*sic*].

Tel. (No. 97.)

R. 5.45 P.M.

Berlin telegrams No. 13⁽¹⁾ and No. 14.⁽²⁾

As I am confined to the house Mr. O'Beirne saw M. Isvolsky this afternoon on my behalf and communicated to him reply of the German Government, as his Excellency had only received a short summary. M. Isvolsky remarked that reply was exactly what he had expected. He is anxious to have your views as to what next steps should be. As to making representations at Belgrade, he did not see what definite acts the Servian Government could be asked to perform, as they had not mobilized and in his opinion had refrained from all provocative action. He gave Mr. O'Beirne copy of a communication which he had just received from Servian Minister, which doubtless has also been made to His Majesty's Government.

He was thinking of proposing that this communication should be brought by the Powers to the notice of German Government, as constituting a pacific assurance on the part of Servian Government, and possibly Germany might be asked to join with the Powers in communicating it to the Vienna Cabinet.

What has occurred at Berlin confirms him in his conviction that Austria-Hungary is determined to take aggressive action.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*c. supra*, pp. 616-7, No. 598.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. a telegram from the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London of February 24, 1909, stating British Government is aware of the seriousness of the situation, Siebert (1921), p. 233.*]

No. 601.

*Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.**Vienna, February 24, 1909.*

F.O. 7560/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 49.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Servia.

In conversation to-day with Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs I alluded to the idea discussed in the press that the Powers should make representations at Belgrade in the cause of peace. He welcomed the idea, and I gathered from what he said that the opportune moment for carrying it out would be when the Austro-Turkish Protocol is signed. He told me with a sigh of relief that this would take place to-morrow. Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs intends to communicate Protocol to the Powers, and if no objections are raised to it by any of them, he thinks that it would be well in the interests of peace if they could bring pressure to bear on the Servian Government, likewise to notify their acceptance of the same by an official declaration. This, accompanied by another declaration to the effect that they desire to cultivate peaceful relations with Austria-Hungary, would, in His Excellency's opinion, form a possible basis for the opening of direct negotiations between Vienna and Belgrade. If, after that, Servian Government then put forward their economic and commercial grievances in moderate language, they would be met by Austria-Hungary in a friendly spirit.

No. 602.

*Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.**Vienna, February 24, 1909.*

F.O. 7561/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 50.) Confidential.

R. 9.20 P.M.

Servia. My telegram No. 49.⁽¹⁾

Baron Aehrenthal explained to me confidentially and privately to-day the grievances of the Austro-Hungarian Government against Servia as follows:—

When the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina took place Austria recognized that Turkey and the Powers had, in a way, as signatories of the Treaty of Berlin, a right to protest against it. To put matters straight Austria-Hungary had now concluded an arrangement with Turkey which she expected the Powers to ratify. Servia, on the other hand, whose status and geographical limits were created by Congress of Berlin, was in no wise affected by the transfer of the suzerainty over the two provinces from the Sultan to the Emperor of Austria. The politicians of every party in Servia, the Royal Family, the press, and finally the Skuptchina have loudly declared themselves in favour of a political programme, which they assert that they mean to carry out, but which can only be carried out by an act of hostility against the integrity of the Austro-Hungarian dominions. In conjunction with this Servia has been steadily arming since the day on which the annexation was announced. His Excellency said that Austria-Hungary could not close her eyes to this state of things, and she could not admit that her act in annexing Bosnia-Herzegovina has in any way struck a blow at the integrity and rights of Servia as established by the Powers at the Berlin Congress.

Austria-Hungary, according to his Excellency, desires heartily to live at peace with her neighbour (?), and even willing to show her very considerable favours, but in face of hostility shown to Austria-Hungary at Belgrade it was difficult for the latter to carry out her good intentions.

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

His Excellency seemed very calm, and strongly deprecated the alarmist rumours in the press. He thought he had given proof of how patient he could be under great provocation. He could continue to be so, and added that every effort would be made by him to maintain peace.

No. 603.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, February 24, 1909.

F.O. 7562/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 51.)

R. 9.50 P.M.

Conference.

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs said to me to-day that he understood from Sir C. Hardinge's conversation with Prince Bülow,⁽¹⁾ which evidently had been communicated to him, that you were on the whole opposed to meeting of a Conference. He is also of opinion that a Conference might give rise to many difficulties. The prospect that the Servian question might be raised there in an acute form might compel Austria-Hungary to abstain from taking part in Conference. He thought that if any Power were allowed to raise Servian question, it would be difficult to exclude discussion of Armenian, Cretan and Egyptian questions.

(¹) [Of February 10. *v. supra*, pp. 608-9, *Ed. note.*]

No. 604.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 7696/26/09/44.

(No. 34.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1909.

I told the Austrian Ambassador to-day that I gathered, from such communiqués as had appeared, that some resentment was felt at Vienna at the idea of representations having been suggested with regard to the Servian question.

There could be no question of bringing pressure to bear upon Austria, and if she was unwilling to hold any communication with the other Powers about the Servian question, the proposed representations would of course be dropped. In any case, all that had been contemplated was a communication in which Austria's allies might have joined.

I told Count Mensdorff that I was not speaking officially, now, or with the object of reviving the proposal; but, to prevent misapprehension as to a matter of past history, I told him unofficially what the purport of our proposal had been. I gave him almost textually the gist of the second and third paragraphs of Telegram No. 53 to Your Excellency.⁽¹⁾ I pointed out to him, especially how we had used the phrase "to avert the contingency of seeing Austria compelled to take active measures against Servia." We had not said "to prevent," or used any expression which was inconsistent with the dignity of Austria. The object of the proposal was two-fold:— (1) To give Austria an opportunity for stating whether she wished us to counsel moderation at Belgrade, and if so on what grounds to base our representation; at present we have no grounds, for my information was to the effect that, though Servia had more troops under arms than was usual at this time of year, the numbers were still within her peace footing: (2) We wished to bring within the sphere of negotiation

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 610-1, No. 585.]

the concessions which Austria was understood to be prepared to offer. Had it not been understood that there were concessions which Austria was prepared to make, it might have been uncivil to her to put forward this second point. But, as Austria had always said that there were some concessions to be made, there could be no incivility in asking her to let us know what they were. If Austria would make known these concessions, the other Powers could then reinforce their counsels of moderation at Belgrade by saying that negotiations were beginning, and that Servia must not do anything to disturb the peace or to give provocation while the negotiations were being carried on.

As it was known at Vienna that a communication or representation had been proposed, I wished Count Mensdorff to know exactly what the idea had been, in order to prevent any misapprehension as to its character.

Count Mensdorff said he was very glad to know what I had told him, and he would repeat it to Baron d'Aehrenthal.

Servia had, however, put forward many impossible demands; and had trained a great number of her reserves. He thought Austria was entitled, before offering any concessions, to demand that impossible claims should be dropped, and threatening measures given up. It would be desirable that the Powers should counsel patience at Belgrade.

I told him it would be easier to counsel patience at Belgrade when we had something to go upon. If, as I understood from the German reply, Austria was not prepared to hold any communication with the other Powers about the Servian difficulty, and meant to take matters into her own hands without giving any opportunity for mediation, the situation might become very serious.

I was sure Baron d'Aehrenthal, when he annexed Bosnia and Herzegovina, had thought there would be little or no diplomatic trouble. But, as a matter of fact, there had been an infinity of trouble. In the same way, it might at present be supposed that war between Austria and Servia would be a small and local affair. But it might produce unforeseen difficulties of a material kind, just as the annexation had produced unforeseen difficulties of a diplomatic kind. I knew that the Russian Government desired to avoid war, and I know no more about the Slav feeling in Russia than any one else, but I understood it was very strong.

I could only say that we held ourselves ready to co-operate in any procedure which would promote peace and be acceptable to the Powers directly interested in the Servian difficulty.

[I am, &c.]

F. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 605.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, February 24, 1909.

. . . .⁽²⁾ But when all is said and done we come back to the question on which so much hangs, will Russia actively intervene in a conflict of Austria with Servia and Montenegro? I am afraid that I may tire you by so often recurring to that point—but to my mind it is the governing factor in the whole problem. I can only repeat that I should say that the probabilities are now that Russia would actively intervene. In any case it would be most rash on the part of d'Aehrenthal to count with certainty

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

on her not doing so. There is an exceedingly bitter and angry feeling against Austria here, which mounts crescendo, and though the Serbs in themselves may not be particularly sympathetic, their individualities do not enter into consideration. If Austrian troops begin to shoot down Serbs and Montenegrins, there will in all probability be a great outburst here—and the indifference with which it is well known that Austria regards Russian feeling, and the light opinion which she holds of Russian strength, do not tend to pacify the public mind. There was a passage in one of Cartwright's telegrams which seemed to indicate that Austria might be inclined to take on Russia singlehanded, and would not call upon Germany. If it were thought here that Germany would not enter necessarily the lists, I should say that there would then be no doubt that Russia would not hesitate to take up the glove. The only restraint that I can see is the fear of Germany, and some doubts as to French aid being easily forthcoming. If it were once known or believed that Germany would possibly hold aloof, the last barrier, and it is not a particularly stout one, would be removed, for in moments of national excitement financial considerations are lost sight of, and the torrent would break loose. . . .⁽²⁾

Y[our]s sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽²⁾ [The omitted passages of this letter describe in general terms the Balkan situation and refer to Prince Ferdinand's visit to Russia.]

No. 606.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 7905/26/09/44.

(No. 48.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1909.

Count Metternich came to see me to-day.

He observed that he supposed I had received the German reply about the Servian question, and I told him of the answer I had sent in a Telegram to Sir E. Goschen to-day, No. 48.⁽¹⁾

Count Metternich again emphasised the fact that the one thing necessary was plain speaking at Belgrade. Serbia was giving the provocation. She had passed Resolutions in her Skupchina demanding territorial compensation, and autonomy for the annexed Provinces without the consent of Austria. The Austrian Minister was daily insulted in the streets of Belgrade. It was natural for Austria to say that she could not tolerate such things and threats from a small country upon her frontier; and that, till these things were discontinued, she could not contemplate offering any economic concessions such as had been referred to.

I said that our proposed communication at Vienna, if carried out, would have given Austria an excellent opportunity for making a reply of this kind on her own account. This would have given the Powers something on which they could consider the question of making a representation at Belgrade. If Austria had stated what economic concessions she was prepared to make, the Powers would at any rate have been able to begin discussing amongst themselves what concessions they should advise Serbia to accept.

The German Government had pointed out that the effect of representations at Belgrade would depend greatly upon whether Russia would join in them. At present, however, we had nothing on which to base representations. All these Resolutions in the Skupchina and speeches to which Count Metternich had referred were so much gesticulation. If there were definite steps of which Austria complained, such as mobilisation, the Powers could have done at Belgrade what they had done at Sofia. But Russia could hardly be expected to tell Serbia that she

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 618-9, No. 599.]

would receive no support, not even diplomatic, and would be left to herself to make the best terms she could with Austria.

I could only repeat that we held ourselves ready to co-operate in any procedure which was likely to promote peace, and to be acceptable to the Powers directly interested.

Count Metternich said that, presumably, by the Powers directly interested I meant Austria and Russia.

I assented.

He then argued that Russia had no real claim to be directly interested in the Servian question.

I told him I understood the Slav feeling in Russia was very strong. Russia felt that, if Serbia was attacked, she also might be involved in the war: this was her direct interest in the matter.

At the time of the South African war I had always resented the argument that no one could have anticipated that the Orange Free State would join the Transvaal, because the Orange Free State had no quarrel with us, because it was not threatened, and would be going out of its way in an unheard-of manner to make the Transvaal's quarrel its own. It always seemed to me certain that, if we had war with the Transvaal, race feeling would oblige the Orange Free State to join in.

Count Metternich replied that the Orange Free State considered it would be hemmed in and lose its independence if the Transvaal was conquered. There was no such analogy between Serbia and Russia, for if Austria fought Serbia, Russia would not be threatened.

I said it seemed to me, on the contrary, that the independence of the Orange Free State was safe if it had stood aside from the war. It risked its independence, and, as a matter of fact, lost it by joining the Transvaal. After all, these things were not questions of merits or of abstract arguments: they were questions of race feeling, which had to be dealt with as matters of fact, and which had been the cause of many wars in history.

Count Metternich still thought that, if Russia wished for peace, the proper course was to make representations at Belgrade.

I said again that Russia could hardly be expected, in order to avoid war, to advise Serbia simply to give in without any prospect of getting anything.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rope]d.—E.R.

No. 607.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 7903/26/09/44.

(No. 43.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 24, 1909.

The Italian Chargé d'Affaires informed me that M. Tittoni had heard of the suggestion which the French Ambassador at Berlin had made for a representation at Belgrade, to be followed by some communication at Vienna asking for favourable consideration. The German Foreign Secretary had promised to consult the Chancellor and the Emperor about this.

M. Tittoni did not think much of it, for he did not believe that Germany intended to do anything at Vienna. M. Tittoni thought, therefore, that the only solution was to summon a Conference at once.

I said I did not see what else could be suggested, though the summoning of a Conference without any indication of how a settlement was to be arrived at was

a rather risky proceeding, to be used only as a last resort to prevent a breach of the peace. Judging by the German reply, however, Austria was not prepared to hold any communication with the other Powers about Serbia, and I did not think that any Conference could be arranged unless Germany proposed it or unless it was ascertained through Germany that Austria would be willing to come to it. We should be prepared to join in a Conference if Austria and Russia agreed to it: but it was no use holding one without them.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 608.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 7562/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, February 25, 1909.

Tel. (No. 75.)

D. 5 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 51.⁽¹⁾

I have always been of opinion that no useful purpose could be served by the meeting of the Conference until a solution had been found of the various questions likely to be raised and within the scope of the Conference.

Prince Bulow expressed to Sir C. Hardinge his opinion that the Conference should meet as soon as a decision had been arrived at by the Powers on the Servian and Montenegrin questions, but that a preliminary agreement was indispensable. Sir C. Hardinge concurred in this view.

If B[ar]on Aehrenthal should again allude to a possible discussion of the Egyptian question at the Conference it would be as well to remind him of Count Mensdorff's letter to Lord Lansdowne of July 27, 1904. The question is moreover outside the Treaty of Berlin.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 621, No. 603.]

No. 609.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 7692/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, February 25, 1909.

Tel. (No. 248.)

D. 7.30 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 97.⁽¹⁾

I have received today a mem[orandum]⁽²⁾ from the Servian Gov[ernment] giving pacific assurances and declaring their intention to await quietly the decision of the Powers.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires has, on M. Isvolsky's instructions, proposed that this communication should be immediately conveyed to the Austrian Gov[ernment] as a serious guarantee of the pacific attitude of Serbia, and that instructions should be sent to the British, Russian, French, and possibly Italian Ambassadors at Berlin to take steps with the German Gov[ernment] in this sense.

You may inform M. Isvolsky that I am ready to send instructions to H[is] M[ajesty's] Amb[assador] at Berlin to cooperate with his Colleagues if the other Powers agree.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 619, No. 600.]
⁽²⁾ [*v. immediately succeeding document.*]

Note communicated to Foreign Office by Servian Legation.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 7692/26/09/44.

Légation Royale de Serbie, February 25, 1909.

Les journaux austro-hongrois ont ces temps derniers répandu la nouvelle que l'Autriche-Hongrie allait incessamment adresser un ultimatum à la Serbie, à la suite des armements serbes et en général à la suite de l'attitude de la Serbie.

Cette nouvelle n'a pas été confirmée par les faits, car le Gouvernement austro-hongrois n'a pas adressé d'ultimatum et n'a fait aucune démarche diplomatique auprès du Gouvernement serbe dans le sens ci-dessus; mais, malgré cela, la continuation dans la presse austro-hongroise de la campagne générale entreprise contre la Serbie donne lieu de supposer que cette campagne est menée dans le but de préparer le terrain à une action de ce genre. D'ailleurs, le Gouvernement serbe a reçu, d'une source autorisée, une information aux termes de laquelle le Gouvernement austro-hongrois aurait ordonné, pour le 24 février n.s., la mobilisation de cinq corps d'armée, et aurait l'intention de déclarer la guerre à la Serbie entre le 7 et le 15 mars n.s. Quoique le Gouvernement serbe ne puisse pas affirmer l'authenticité de cette information dans toutes ses parties, il n'en reste pas moins le fait que l'ordre a été donné à toutes les stations postales, télégraphiques et téléphoniques hongroises de soumettre toutes les informations à la censure militaire.

Eu égard à ce qui précède, le Gouvernement serbe tient à déclarer que la Serbie n'a, par aucun acte de sa part, donné prétexte à des démarches et à des actes semblables à ceux ci-dessus cités. La Serbie n'a pris aucunes mesures militaires qui pourraient être considérées comme une menace ou comme un danger pour l'Autriche-Hongrie. Tous ses préparatifs militaires son [sic] d'une nature telle que, en égard à la situation générale dans la Péninsule Balcanique, la Serbie aurait été tenue de les faire même si ses droits et ses intérêts ne se trouvaient pas directement lésés. Les frontières de la Serbie, du côté de l'Autriche-Hongrie, sont, au point de vue militaire, dans une situation tout à fait normale, tandis qu'au contraire l'Autriche-Hongrie a accumulé des troupes tout le long de la Drina et de la frontière nord serbe. Par suite, non seulement la Serbie ne menace pas la sécurité de l'Autriche-Hongrie mais bien au contraire, se reposant sur les Puissances dont elle a suivi exactement et scrupuleusement les conseils, elle a laissé ses frontières du côté de l'Autriche-Hongrie complètement ouvertes—ce qui l'expose maintenant à devenir la victime d'une agression soudaine de la part de l'Autriche-Hongrie.

Dans ces conditions un ultimatum ou une démarche semblable de la part de l'Autriche-Hongrie constituerait une attaque contre la Serbie que rien ne pourrait justifier et contre laquelle la Serbie serait obligée de se défendre de toutes ses forces, sans considération de risques—car cette attaque mettrait en question son indépendance même.

Le Gouvernement serbe ne désire pas cependant croire à la possibilité d'une action de ce genre de la part de l'Autriche-Hongrie, d'autant plus qu'il sait que l'Autriche-Hongrie a connaissance des conseils qui ont été donnés par les Puissances à la Serbie et de la façon dont ces conseils ont été suivis par la Serbie. C'est pourquoi les attaques de la presse austro-hongroise ne modifieront en rien l'attitude de la Serbie qui continuera d'attendre avec calme la décision des Puissances au sujet de ses droits et intérêts engagés dans la question de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine.

⁽¹⁾ [Transmitted to Mr. Whitehead in despatch No. 16 of February 27, 1909, *v. infra*, pp. 640-1, No. 623.]

No. 611.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 7746/26/09/44.

(No. 99.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 25, 1909.

The French Ambassador told me to-day about the proposition which had been made by M. Kiderlen to the effect that France, Germany, England, and Russia should make a representation at Belgrade, advising the Servians to renounce their claims to territorial compensation, to state what economic concessions would satisfy them, and informing them that if they would do this the Powers would hold themselves at their disposal to secure favourable consideration for these economic concessions at Vienna. M. Pichon would like to have my opinion.

I replied that in the first place it was essential to make sure that M. Kiderlen's proposition, which had been put forward "officieusement" only, would really be carried through by the Emperor and the German Government. It would never do for us to be led on to induce the Servians to renounce their claims for territorial compensation, and then to find that any advances we made at Vienna met with a rebuff from the Austrian Government. It should, therefore, be clearly understood that, if the Servians were induced to renounce their claims for territorial compensation, the German Government would do their part in supporting economic concessions at Vienna.

In the second place, we could not give this advice to Serbia without the consent of Russia. Otherwise, both Serbia and Russia would blame us for having thrown over Serbia, and if Russia did not join in the representations they would not be effective. The first thing Serbia would do in such a case would be to appeal to Russia, to know what support might be expected from her. It was, therefore, absolutely necessary that Russia should join with us in the proposed step at Belgrade. It would be an unpopular thing for her to do, and I did not see how we could ask her to do it unless we could convince the Russian Government that if Serbia were induced to renounce her territorial claims Germany would then do her part in supporting economic concessions. M. Iswolsky was very distrustful of Germany, and it would be essential to give him a firm assurance on this point.

M. Cambon agreed with my views, and summed them up by saying that in the first place we must make sure that M. Kiderlen's proposal was that of the German Government and Emperor; and in the second place we must make sure that if Russia did her part at Belgrade Germany would do her part at Vienna.

I told M. Cambon that, in my opinion, the only way to avoid war was for Serbia to renounce her territorial claims. But I could not give the Servians this advice without the consent of the Russian Government: for, if I did so, I should be open to the charge of having gone behind their backs and thrown them over.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [Also in shorter form in Tel. No. 156 of same day, *cp.* for the proposal, G.P. XXVI, II, pp. 624-9.]

No. 612.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, February 26, 1909.*

F.O. 7770/26/09/44A.

D. 7.42 P.M.

Tel. (No. 102.) Urgent.

R. 9 P.M.

Your telegram No. 248 (of 25th February: Austria and Servia).⁽¹⁾

M. Iswolsky is much obliged for your ready response and agreement. I found him much upset, and, I may say, indignant, at a communication which had just

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 625, No. 609.]

been made by French Ambassador with regard to Kiderlen proposal.⁽²⁾ French Government said they were disposed to agree to it, and seemed to wish Russia should join in proposed steps at Belgrade. He said France had gone over bag and baggage to Austria, and was requesting Russia to ask of Serbia certain declarations and acts which no Servian Government would accept, and, what was (?) still stronger, that Russia should then leave Serbia alone before Austria to negotiate with the latter, and to accept such terms as the latter might be pleased to accord.

(? Previous to) first outburst against French Ambassador he had characterized the French action as a denunciation of the alliance, etc. I told M. Isvolsky that French Government probably only wished to ascertain his views, and that when he had explained to them special position and special interests of Russia in Balkan questions they would not press point. No one, I was sure, wished to place Russia in an embarrassing position. He knew well we desired to cooperate with Russia in Near Eastern matters. I did not mention your telegram No. 156 to Sir F. Bertie,⁽³⁾ as I did not want to excite him more against France or to lead him to make comparisons still more detrimental to latter. I said I had no instructions as to the Kiderlen proposal.

He said he saw game of Austria-Hungary and Germany; it was to put forward proposals to which they knew Russia would probably give a negative reply, and would thereby put Russia in the position either of being the obstacle to peace or of abandoning the cause of a Slav State in the most humiliating manner.

I told him he could avoid this dilemma and have time for reflection and consultation with his colleagues by losing no time in putting in the Servian communication at Berlin. This procedure should have priority. If Berlin again declined to join, the onus would be on Germany, and in any case two or three days would have been gained for him to think over the other procedure. He said that Paris had not yet replied to his proposal as to the Servian communication. I asked if he would like me to ask you to hasten a reply from Paris. He begged me to do so.

He did not know if the Servian Government had communicated their Circular to Berlin, and he was a little doubtful whether the final words of the Servian communication as to their rights in the Bosnian question might not irritate Austria unnecessarily. I said that I would mention this to you. He is most anxious to get French agreement to taking steps at Berlin.⁽⁴⁾ He is more than ever convinced that Austria intends to attack Serbia. Before doing so the Kiderlen proposal is put forward. If presented at Belgrade, Serbia would refuse to accept it, and there would be good cause for war. If Russia declined to join with the other Powers and the proposal fell through, she would be accused of having raised obstacles to peace being maintained, and as being the cause of war.

⁽²⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *ib.*, note.]

⁽⁴⁾ [v. a communication of the French Embassy at St. Petersburg to M. Isvolski of February 26, 1909. Siebert (1921), p. 231.]

No. 613.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 26, 1909.

F.O. 7771/26/09/44A.

D. 8.37 P.M.

Tel. (No. 103.)

R. 8.45 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

I observed to M. Isvolsky that territorial compensation to Serbia or autonomy of the two provinces in the sense she desired were evidently impossible to obtain.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately preceding document.]

What compensations then did he think Serbia could obtain? He said that he did not know. He said that concessions Austria offered were not concessions. On the contrary, proposed linking up of the Bosnian and Servian Railways was merely "riveting Austria" more securely on Serbia. The Servian Adriatic Railway would be a concession from Turkey, not from Austria.

No. 614.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 26, 1909.

F.O. 7772/26/09/44A.

D. 8.35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 104.) Urgent.

R. 9 P.M.

My telegram No. 102 (of 26th February: Austria and Serbia).⁽¹⁾

Since my interview with M. Isvolsky, latter received communication from new Servian Government of a less satisfactory nature than the former communication. He hesitates to take communication as a basis for addressing Berlin, and, as former one is now obsolete, he is much embarrassed.

I will see him to-morrow.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 627-8, No. 612.]

No. 615.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 7941/26/09/44A.

(No. 66.)

Berlin, D. February 26, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 1, 1909.

My telegrams will have given you a full account of the proceedings at Berlin following upon your communication to me of the draft telegram to Sir F. Cartwright⁽²⁾ and your instructions to endeavour to obtain the support of the German Government to your proposed representations to Baron d'Aehrenthal. It will however perhaps be useful for future reference if I place on record in a despatch the various phases of these negotiations.

Directly I heard that you had communicated the draft telegram to Count Metternich I realized that no time was to be lost, as it was certain that Vienna would be at once informed of what was passing. Having some small matters to talk over with Herr von Schoen, I telephoned to His Excellency and asked whether he could see me. He replied however that he knew on what subject I wished to speak to him and that as he had no answer ready, he would ask me to postpone my visit. This was on Friday the 19th instant. On the evening of that day I received your instructions to take immediate action and to ask my French colleague to co-operate. Owing to the lateness of the hour at which I received these instructions I was unable to see Herr von Schoen but I found Monsieur Jules Cambon at home and discussed the matter with him. He had not at that moment received any instructions to co-operate, but as it was clear that they might arrive at any minute, we arranged that I should see Herr von Schoen on the next day as early as possible and that he should see him immediately afterwards. On the following morning M. Cambon informed me that his instructions had arrived. As we had both in the meantime learned from the telegrams repeated to us that the co-operation of Russia and Italy had been requested M. Cambon went to see the Russian Ambassador while I undertook to speak to M. Pansa. M. Cambon found Count Ostensacken indisposed,

(¹) [Reported at considerably less length in Telegram No. 10 of February 20, 1909, *v. supra*, p. 615, No. 595, *note*. See also Telegram No. 13 of February 23, *supra*, pp. 616-7, No. 598.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 610-11, No. 585.]

so he arranged that he himself should speak for His Excellency and convey to Herr von Schoen a message to the effect that the Russian Government was in entire sympathy with your proposed action at Vienna and hoped the German Government would see its way to supporting it.

I found the Italian Ambassador without any instructions to co-operate. He had received a résumé of your draft telegram to Sir F. Cartwright but no directions as to any actions to be taken at Berlin in co-operation with me. I told him that he was sure to get them, and that the matter was so urgent that I could not defer approaching the German Government. I added that the co-operation of M. Cambon was already secured and probably also that of Count Ostensacken. He said that in that case he would also see Herr von Schoen and though without instructions he could not speak in the name of his Government, he would do all he could to support my representation privately.

Herr von Schoen received me at 5 o'clock and after I had read to him the draft of your telegram to Sir F. Cartwright and asked him whether you could count on the support of the Imperial Government to the propositions contained in it, he at once begged me to convey to you the following message :

"The Imperial Government is in entire sympathy with the project of His Majesty's Government and indeed with any project which has the object of diminishing the danger of a conflict between Austria-Hungary and Servia. We are giving the matter our best attention but His Majesty's Government will readily understand that in doing so we have to take into consideration the feelings of our ally. The commands of the Emperor on the subject are now being taken and I hope to be able to give a definite reply to-morrow."

I said that I hoped this message was not preliminary to a refusal of German support to your proposed representation at Vienna. The object of your action there was the maintenance of peace and I could conceive of no surer means to make the peace of Europe absolutely secure than that Germany should join with the other Powers in the action proposed.

Herr von Schoen replied that in view of the pacific assurances which the Imperial Government had received and were still receiving from Vienna, he considered the step would not only do no good but would probably do harm. Collective action, moreover, always contained an idea of pressure and he must confess that Germany, Austria's ally, could not be a party to anything of that nature. I replied that in my opinion collective action did not necessarily imply pressure, but it certainly emphasized the importance of the action to which it was applied, and there could be nothing more important than the maintenance of peace. I could see no attempt at pressure in your proposed representation to the Austro-Hungarian Government. They were more in the nature of a request to a Power who held all the threads of a complicated and apparently dangerous situation to throw some light upon it. It seemed to me that a certain amount of enlightenment as to the future was a matter of at least as much interest to Germany as to the other Powers. At this point I added that both Prince Bülow and he had recently expressed their earnest desire to act with Great Britain in Near Eastern matters and that your proposed action, which did not go beyond a request for very desirable information, appeared to furnish an excellent opportunity for their doing so without arousing any susceptibility on the part of their ally. Herr von Schoen hastened to assure me that the desire of the Imperial Government to act with us was absolutely sincere and that they would gladly join in a collective step at Belgrade, a step which he considered would be both more justifiable and more efficacious. I replied that his words conveyed to me the impression that there was a disposition on his part to forget the origin of the events which were the cause of the present general anxiety; moreover that there had been no lack of representations and advice given at Belgrade, advice which had apparently been followed. His Excellency then informed me that it was a mistake to think that the Servians were abstaining from

provocation. Only recently the Austro-Hungarian Government had laid their hands on incriminating documents at Prague which distinctly proved the existence of a dangerous movement against Austria-Hungary carried on by Servian agitators. I said that if that was so, your proposed representations at Vienna would give Baron Aehrenthal an excellent opportunity of laying their causes of complaint against Serbia before the Powers, who could then with greater effect bring such influence as they possessed to bear at Belgrade. More light was what was required. Time was getting on; the spring was not far off; and it was intolerable that the whole of Europe should be kept in a state of suspense. The object of His Majesty's Government had been to clear up the situation and remove all grounds for that suspense.

On the same evening the French Ambassador saw the Chancellor, having arranged to see him on another question. M. Cambon took the opportunity of discussing your proposed action and the reply we had received from Herr von Schoen. Prince Bülow said that he felt absolutely certain that Austria-Hungary had no aggressive intentions, but still he quite understood our desire to cause some light to be thrown on the situation. Personally he would be very glad if Germany could act with us and obtain such information from Austria-Hungary as would enable the Powers to place matters in a clear light before the Servian Government. This would make Baron Aehrenthal's assurances doubly sure, and greatly diminish the chances of a conflict. Baron Aehrenthal was, however, a difficult man to deal with and he would be sure to resent the appearance of pressure which collective action on the part of the Powers must necessarily imply. The position of the Imperial Government was therefore very embarrassing. It was, he added, all a question of form. He was going to see the Emperor on the following day and he would endeavour to submit to His Majesty some means which offered the possibility of acting with us without arousing the susceptibilities of their ally.

In the meantime the Italian Ambassador saw the Secretary of State and spoke to him privately in support of my representations. Herr von Schoen, after giving him the same reply as he had given to M. Cambon and myself, said that the definite reply of the Imperial Government would probably be of an evasive nature as they knew that in conversation with the French Ambassador at Vienna Baron Aehrenthal had stated that the contemplated representations would be distasteful to him in view of the positive assurances he had already given that the Austro-Hungarian Government would not resort to any aggressive movement against Serbia unless provoked beyond endurance. Herr von Schoen added that the German Ambassador at Vienna had reported that Baron Aehrenthal had thrown out hints to the effect that he might possibly open negotiations with Serbia as soon as the question with Turkey was settled.

On the following day nothing was heard from Herr von Schoen but on the afternoon of the 21st His Excellency asked M. Cambon and myself to come to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

On my presenting myself at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Herr von Schoen at once dictated to me the definite reply of the Imperial Government to our representations, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy in the original French. The French Ambassador was then announced and after he had taken cognizance of the document, we proceeded to make such comments as its contents suggested. After expressing my regret that the Imperial Government had not seen its way to joining us in the action proposed by His Majesty's Government, I said that the Powers had repeatedly called upon the Servian Government to restrain warlike agitation upon their countrymen and had advised them to be careful to avoid all causes of offense [*sic*] against their powerful neighbour. Our reports from Serbia would seem to show that these representations had been successful, and His Majesty's Government were unaware that Serbia had given any fresh grounds for reproach. On the other hand no such representations had even been made to Austria-Hungary and certainly there never had been any attempt from any quarter to bring pressure

to bear upon her. After a short comparison between the military preparations of the two countries I said that, rightly or wrongly, but in many quarters, Austria-Hungary was now reported to have aggressive intentions and I quite failed to understand how she could possibly resent, even from an ally, a few friendly words indicating the desire that she should throw some light on the situation by making some statement with regard to her grievances and her future plan of action. Herr von Schoen replied that the representations proposed would certainly be resented, as Baron Aehrenthal had told the French Ambassador at Vienna "who had sounded him on the subject" that it would be very badly received and would do more harm than good.

The French Ambassador said that he entirely shared the regret which I had expressed that the Imperial Government had not seen its way to give their support to the proposed action at Vienna, and that, moreover, he quite agreed with me in thinking that by not joining in such an inoffensive request the Imperial Government had lost a good opportunity of giving effect to their desire to act with France and England in the Near East. However the Imperial Government had seen matters in a different light so there was no more to be said. He then observed, speaking entirely in his own name and not in that of his Government, that he saw in the proposition of His Majesty's Government a wish to put an end to the division of Europe into two camps, with the main idea that if Germany joined with the other Powers in the action proposed at Vienna, all chances of a conflict would be definitely put on one side. Germany had refused this manner of procedure, but there were more ways of entering a field than by the gate, and he saw in Germany's suggestion that representations should be made at Belgrade, a way in which the common action proposed by His Majesty's Government could still be secured. This way would be that Germany should not only join in such representations at Belgrade but should also associate herself with the Powers in conveying such assurances as they might receive from Serbia to the knowledge of the Austro-Hungarian Government. Herr von Schoen said he would lay M. Cambon's proposal before the Chancellor who would be sure to submit it to the Emperor. On leaving Herr von Schoen's room, we met Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter, to whom M. Cambon repeated his proposal. Herr von Kiderlen said that he had not time to discuss the matter then, but that he would call on M. Cambon on the following morning. The result of this conversation was that Herr Kiderlen suggested that M. Cambon should endeavour to get his Government to agree to the proposal and that if they approved he, Herr Kiderlen, would sound the Emperor and Chancellor on the subject. Should their opinion be favourable England and Russia should be invited to join in the action proposed if unfavourable then the matter could be dropped. In this manner any official refusal, such as had been given in the present case, would be avoided. Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter enjoined the greatest secrecy on M. Cambon with regard to their conversation, and above all begged him not to breathe a word of it to the Emperor who at the present moment was very "Austrian."

The conversation however was promptly reported by Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter to the Austrian Ambassador who at once called upon M. Cambon and expressed his concurrence both with the idea that the Powers should be represented at Belgrade and that they, including Germany, should bring the result of those representations to the knowledge of the Austro-Hungarian Government.⁽³⁾ He felt sure that his Government would have no objection to that procedure. M. Cambon replied that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador was going too fast, that before such a procedure could be adopted not only the approval of the French Government, but that of other Governments must be secured and that moreover some previous knowledge of the intentions of the Austro-Hungarian Government would be required. It would place the Powers in a ridiculous position if, while making representations to the Servian Government their negotiations were to be suddenly interrupted by a declaration of

⁽³⁾ [An interview with M. Jules Cambon is reported by Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter on the 26th February, 1909, G.P., XXVI, II, pp. 629-30.]

war or the issue of an ultimatum. To this the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador replied that it was the fixed determination of the Emperor Francis Joseph, to avoid war if possible, and that as for an ultimatum, though he could not guarantee that none would ever be issued, he could declare positively that there would be nothing of the sort for a fortnight or three weeks. M. Cambon at once asked whether he might regard this statement as authoritative and whether he might telegraph it to his Government as such. The Austrian Ambassador replied "Certainly!"

On the following day, the 25th instant, M. Cambon was informed by the Russian Ambassador that the Russian Government were quite disposed to join the other Powers in making representations at Belgrade, but suggested that in the meantime the German Government should be requested to join with the other Powers in communicating to the Austro-Hungarian Government certain pacific assurances which had been received from the Servian Government.

M. Cambon observed that in the interest of common action which was the main object to be attained at the present moment, it was important to avoid putting proposals before the German Government which might meet with a refusal. He considered that Germany's consent to join in the representations at Belgrade and in their conveyance to Vienna was almost certain, and that it would be better not to complicate matters by further proposals. The Russian Ambassador agreed that this would perhaps be the wisest course and telegraphed in that sense to his Government.

I dined with Prince Bülow last night and had a short conversation with him. He regretted very much that the Imperial Government had not seen its way to assenting to the proposal of His Majesty's Government for common action at Vienna. I shared his regret and told him that I thought your proposal very moderate and such as any Government, even an allied Government might have supported. "But we will support you," he said, "only we think that action should be taken at Belgrade and not at Vienna." I said, "But can we count upon your support not only in obtaining assurances at Belgrade but also in recommending them to favourable consideration at Vienna." He replied that most certainly the Imperial Government would have no objection to such a course if the assurances given at Belgrade were of a satisfactory nature. I asked him what he would consider to be satisfactory assurances, and he said that of course all idea of territorial compensation must be dropped. He branched off to remark that he had received most satisfactory news from Vienna, and that Baron d'Aehrenthal seemed to be in a very conciliatory mood. He then gave me an account of a conversation between Baron d'Aehrenthal and Herr von Tschirschky, which corresponded almost exactly with the conversation reported by Sir F. Cartwright in his telegram to you No. 50 of the 25th instant.⁽⁴⁾

Prince Bülow said that he now considered the situation more favourable than it had been for some time, the only black spot being, in his opinion, Servia's demand for territorial compensation. "Once she drops that ridiculous idea there will be no more fear of dangerous complications, as I am sure Baron d'Aehrenthal is quite ready to meet any other demands in a liberal and conciliatory spirit."

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

Enclosure in No. 615.

Note communicated to Sir E. Goschen by Herr von Schoen.

Réponse du Gouvernement Allemand.

February 22, 1909.

D'ordre de Sa Majesté l'Empereur auquel la proposition du Gouvernement Britannique a été soumise, j'ai l'honneur de vous transmettre la réponse suivante :

Le Gouvernement Impérial est très heureux de constater que la proposition du Gouvernement Britannique est inspirée par le même désir qui a toujours animé le

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Gouvernement Impérial d'écarter autant que possible toute cause de complication en Orient et notamment tout ce qui pourrait amener un conflit entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Serbie.

Le Gouvernement Impérial tout en étant entièrement en accord avec le Gouvernement Britannique, dont la proposition reflète les intentions pacifiques, se trouve à son grand regret dans l'impossibilité de donner son adhésion à la manière de procéder qui lui est proposée.

Une action ayant pour but de faire cesser les différends existant actuellement entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Serbie, devrait, suivant l'avis du Gouvernement Impérial s'exercer plutôt à Belgrade qu'à Vienne. C'est en effet de la Serbie que partent les provocations. Des menaces de guerre ont été faites dans les cercles officiels et non-officiels en Serbie au sujet d'une question qui ne concerne pas le royaume serbe. La situation de ce royaume n'a été altérée ni au point de vue de ses intérêts matériels ni au point de vue de ses droits par le fait que l'occupation d'une durée illimitée de deux provinces ottomanes a été transformée en possession. On comprend difficilement comment de ce fait il résulterait à la Serbie un droit de compensation.

Nous ne pouvons demander à l'Autriche-Hongrie de faire par l'entremise d'autres Puissances des avances et des promesses à la Serbie qui l'a menacée et qui la menace encore d'actes d'hostilité.

En cédant à une pareille proposition l'Autriche-Hongrie s'exposerait à paraître plier devant une pression extérieure. L'Autriche-Hongrie a déclaré à différentes reprises ne pas vouloir attaquer la Serbie. Elle a prouvé la sincérité de sa déclaration et son ferme dessein de s'y conformer par la longanimité avec laquelle elle est restée jusqu'à présent impassible devant les nombreuses provocations serbes. La tranquillité et la paix ne seront menacées que par la Serbie, les menées et les menaces auxquelles la Serbie continue à se plaire étant seules de nature à créer une situation intolérable pour la grande monarchie voisine et à forcer cette dernière à user du droit incontestable de chaque Puissance d'établir l'ordre et la tranquillité sur ses frontières. Si la Serbie ainsi qu'elle la déclare veut, en dépit de l'attitude de son Gouvernement, de son Parlement et du successeur au trône, maintenir réellement la paix, il n'y a pas lieu de craindre un conflit. L'Autriche-Hongrie s'étant même montrée disposée à accorder certains avantages économiques à la Serbie le Gouvernement Impérial estime que dans l'intérêt même de cette puissance il y aurait lieu de faire à Belgrade une démarche pour demander au Gouvernement Serbe de garantir que son attitude provocatrice ne se prolongera pas, qu'il conformera ses actes aux assurances pacifiques données par lui aux Puissances et qu'il s'adressera ensuite directement à l'Autriche-Hongrie pour discuter les avantages économiques que celle-ci veut bien lui accorder. Une démarche à Belgrade serait d'autant plus efficace que toutes les Puissances et notamment la Russie y participeraient.

No. 616.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 8176/26/09/44.

(No. 51.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 26, 1909.

The German Ambassador reminded me to-day of my promise to co-operate in any proposal which was likely to promote peace and to be acceptable to the Powers directly interested in the Servian difficulty. He then told me that Germany was going to make such a proposal, which she hoped would form an accord with France and us. If her hope were realised, Germany as the ally of Austria would support the proposal at Vienna, and would ask France as the ally of Russia to support it

at St. Petersburg, and Germany hoped we would support France in doing this. He said the proposal would be communicated to you for transmission to me.

I replied that I was very glad to hear that a proposal was coming, and I should be delighted to receive it.

From some subsequent conversation, I gathered the proposal would be that Servia should be induced to give up her territorial claims, and that Austria should make economic concessions.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 617.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 27, 1909.

F.O. 7911/26/09/44A.

D. 12.25 P.M.

Tcl. (No. 105.)

R. 1.30 P.M.

I understand from my French colleague that he has recommended his Gov[ernmen]t not to press Kiderlen proposal⁽¹⁾ on the Russian Gov[ernmen]t and he told me he had the impression that the latter might privately and unofficially recommend Servian Gov[ernmen]t to moderate their demands and remain quiescent. He thinks he has persuaded Isvolsky that the French Gov[ernmen]t in no way desired to force hands of Russian Gov[ernmen]t or to ask them to take any steps which were displeasing to them.

M. Isvolsky in conversation with him contrasted the loyal attitude of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], the friends of Russia, with that of Russia's ally and also pointed out to the French Ambassador as he also did to me that in Casablanca incident Russia had expressed her readiness to remain faithful to the alliance in all eventualities. I will see M. Isvolsky today and ascertain whether he has any proposal to make which may lead to a pacific solution.⁽²⁾

MINUTES.

If M. Isvolsky will give the advice privately and unofficially and the other Powers give similar advice, the object will have been achieved and the way will be open for direct negotiations between Austria and Servia.

L. M.

It is not a question of moderation but of withdrawal of territorial claims.

C. H.

Yes: the time has come to be more definite.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 627, No. 611.]

⁽²⁾ [M. Isvolski telegraphed to Paris on the 27th protesting strongly against the Kiderlen proposal, Siebert (1921), p. 234.]

No. 618.

*Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.**Belgrade, February 27, 1909.*

F.O. 7923/26/09/44A.

D. 6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 12.)

R. 7 P.M.

Serbia.

Minister for Foreign Affairs assured me yesterday that the present coalition Government was pacific and strong enough to resist any violent popular impulse. He added that Russia continued to counsel moderation and prudence, and that Servian Government would further defer the issue of their Memorandum.

I expressed earnest hope that Serbia would be entirely guided by the advice of the (?) Great Powers whatever it might be.

In reply to my question as to rumour of mobilization which was current here yesterday his Excellency said that only step that had been decided on was the calling out of some reservists of the 3rd ban (38 to 45 years of age) to reinforce the frontier garrisons in order to guard against a sudden attack, which would disorganize eventual mobilization in those districts.

I said this seemed to me a most dangerous measure liable to arouse further mistrust of Servian intentions in Austria-Hungary, but he replied that, in view of Austria's threats, Servian Government could not take responsibility of neglecting elementary precautions.

Military Attaché informs me that rumours in question arose from arrival of further reservists and peasant oxen from Belgrade to the interior. Aide-de-camp to Minister of War denies that any unusual measures are being taken.

No. 619.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, February 27, 1909.*

F.O. 7918/26/09/44A.

D. 6.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 106.)

R. 7 P.M.

In reply to last two communications from Servian Government M. Isvolsky intends to telegraph to Russian Minister at Belgrade to the effect that Russian Government is gratified to hear Serbia is determined to give no cause whatever for any provocation to Austria, etc., and they recommend Servian Government to drop claim for territorial compensations as the Powers are not disposed to entertain such demands. Russian Government advise Serbia to maintain peaceful attitude and to leave their case entirely in the hands of the Powers.⁽¹⁾

I told M. Isvolsky that I thought this step on his part an admirable one, and I was sure it would be pleasing to my Government.

He told me that when he received Servian reply he would then propose that it should be brought to the notice of the Austrian Government, who should be asked what were their intentions. He is strongly against any direct negotiations between Austria and Serbia, as the latter, even if she accepted idea, would be entirely at the mercy of the former; and, moreover, Austria had agreed that point 7⁽²⁾ of the original Conference programme should be discussed between all the Powers, and

⁽¹⁾ [An official communiqué, stating the substance of M. Isvolski's warning to Belgrade, was published in St. Petersburg on March 15, 1909.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 453, No. 390, and p. 539, No. 491, *Encl. II.*]

had only made the reservation that the "advantages" should be of an economic nature. He thinks that his action will be much criticized here, but he is anxious to refute the accusations made in Germany and Austria that Russia is the sole obstacle to peace. He of course will have nothing to do with the Kiderlen proposal.

No. 620.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 27, 1909.

F.O. 7920/26/09/44A.

D. 6.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 108.)

R. 7.30 P.M.

M. Isvolsky told me Prince Ferdinand gave both Emperor and himself solemn assurances there was no understanding of any kind between Austria and Bulgaria, and M. Isvolsky replied that of course if His Royal Highness said so he was bound to believe him, but that many had believed otherwise.

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks that he has secured that, in the event of conflict between Austria and Servia, Bulgaria would not fall on the latter, though he did not seem absolutely confident on this head. He had not much confidence in Prince Ferdinand.

No. 621.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 7772/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 254.)

Foreign Office, February 27, 1909.

Your telegrams Nos. 102-4.⁽²⁾

You will have seen that in my communications to French and German Gov[ernmen]ts I have emphasized difficulties of Russian position in almost the same terms as Iswolsky has now used to you. But your observation to Iswolsky in the first sentence of your tel[egram] No. 103 represents the facts of the situation, which Iswolsky must realize. Nothing except economic concessions can be obtained for Servia without a successful war. Unless Servia renounces territorial claims there will be war.⁽³⁾ I understood from M. Iswolsky in October that these claims would probably have to be abandoned in the end: I made it clear that we would support Russia in getting what could be obtained by diplomatic support, but that we could not press things to the point of war.

Our impression is that Servian Gov[ernmen]t cannot owing to internal opinion renounce territorial claims on her own responsibility, but she has declared her intention of awaiting with calm the decision of the Powers.

German Ambassador informed me yesterday that some proposal was coming from Germany to us and to France. I have not yet received it, but I think it will be to the effect that if Servia will renounce territorial claims Austria should be invited to consider favourably economic concessions.

I have already expressed to French Gov[ernmen]t opinion that Russian advice to Servia to renounce territorial concessions cannot be expected unless there is firm assurance from Germany of support to obtain economic concessions at Vienna. To this I adhere. Time has now come when Russia should decide whether she means to give Servia armed support to obtain territorial concessions or to tell her at the critical moment that in the interest of peace these demands cannot be supported.

(1) [Paraphrased in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol I, pp. 186-7.]

(2) [*v. supra.* pp. 627-9, No. 612-4.]

(3) [*cp.* Russian report from London of February 27, 1909. Siebert (1921), p. 233.]

If Russia feels it difficult for her to be first to explain to Servia the logic of the situation we and France might do so in the interests of peace, but we must first ourselves know what Russia intends to do.

We are of opinion that to risk for Servian territorial claims a war which might eventually involve the greater part of the continent of Europe must even from the Russian point of view be out of all proportion to the interests at stake.

For view of your tel[egram] No. 105⁽⁴⁾ just received, I only state this to you as representing our opinion and leave it to your discretion as to how much it is desirable to say at present moment.

Repeated to Paris, (No. 159), Belgrade, (No. 40), February 27, 1909.

(⁴) [*v. supra*, p. 635, No. 617.]

No. 622.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 8210/26/09/44A.

(No. 29.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. February 27, 1909.

R. March 2, 1909.

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text in French, published in the semi-official "Fremdenblatt" this evening, of the Austro-Turkish Protocol which was signed at Constantinople yesterday.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

Enclosure in No. 622.

Text of Austro-Turkish Protocol, signed at Constantinople.

February 26, 1909.

"Le gouvernement ottoman et le gouvernement impérial et royal commun d'Autriche-Hongrie désirant donner d'un commun accord une solution à certaines questions pendantes entre eux, les soussignés, Houssein Hilmi pacha, grandvezir, Gabriel Effendi Noradunghian, ministre *ad interim* impérial ottoman des affaires étrangères, et Jean marquis Pallavicini, ambassadeur extraordinaire et plénipotentiaire d'Autriche-Hongrie, dûment autorisés par leurs gouvernements respectifs sont convenus des stipulations suivantes :

"Article I. L'Autriche-Hongrie déclare renoncer d'une façon expresse à tous les droits qui lui ont été conférés par rapport à l'ancien sandjak de Novibazar par le traité de Berlin et la convention de Constantinople du 21 avril 1879.

"Article II. La convention du 21 avril 1879 ainsi que la protestation de la Sublime Porte contre la décision du gouvernement commun d'Autriche-Hongrie concernant la Bosnie et l'Herzégovine et toutes les autres dispositions ou stipulations existantes entre les hautes parties contractantes et contraires à cette décision sont abrogées et remplacées par le présent protocole qui constate que toute divergence au sujet de ces deux provinces est aplanie entre elles et que le gouvernement ottoman reconnaît d'une façon expresse le nouvel état de choses en Bosnie-Herzégovine créé par la dite décision.

"Article III. Les originaux de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine qui se trouvent actuellement en Turquie à l'exception des personnes indiqués dans les notes qui seront échangées entre les parties contractantes lors de la ratification du présent protocole ainsi que les sujets ottomans originaux des différentes parties de l'empire

ottoman de passage ou en résidence fixe en Bosnie-Herzégovine continueront à conserver leur nationalité ottomane comme par le passé. Les habitants de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine domiciliés dans ces provinces seront libres d'émigrer dans l'empire ottoman en se conformant comme auparavant aux lois de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine et ils seront admis en Turquie comme ottomans ceux-ci de même que les originaires de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine qui se trouvent actuellement en Turquie, auront toujours le droit de disposer pleinement de leurs immeubles sis en Bosnie et en Herzégovine, de les affermer ou de les administrer directement par eux-mêmes ou par des tiers. Il est entendu que les originaires de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine qui sans esprit d'émigration se rendraient désormais en Turquie y seront traités sur le même pied que les sujets autrichiens ou hongrois.

“ Article IV. La liberté et la pratique extérieure du culte musulman seront assurées comme par le passé aux personnes habitant ou séjournant en Bosnie et en Herzégovine. Les musulmans continueront à jouir des mêmes droits civils et politiques que tous les habitants de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine appartenant à d'autres cultes. Le nom de Sa Majesté impériale le Sultan comme chalife continuera à être prononcé dans les prières publiques des musulmans. Les droits de fondations pieuses (*vakoufs*) seront respectés comme par le passé et aucune entrave ne sera apportée aux rapports des musulmans avec leurs chefs spirituels qui dépendront comme toujours du cheik ul islamat à Constantinople, lequel donnera l'investiture au reis ul ulema.

“ Article V. Une décision arbitrale ayant constaté de plus que d'après le code foncier ottoman l'état ottoman possédait en Bosnie-Herzégovine des biens immeubles de diverses natures, le gouvernement commun d'Autriche-Hongrie s'engage à payer à Constantinople dans un délai de quinze jours qui suivront la ratification du présent protocole au gouvernement ottoman une somme de deux et demi millions de livres turques en or comme contrevaletur de ces biens immeubles.

“ Article VI. L'Autriche-Hongrie s'engage à conclure avec la Turquie dans un délai de deux ans à compter de la date de la ratification du présent protocole sur la base du droit public européen un traité de commerce qui sera mis en vigueur en tant que les autres traités de commerce de la Sublime Porte seront conclus et mis en vigueur sur la même base. En attendant l'Autriche-Hongrie consent après un délai de quinze jours à partir de la ratification du présent acte à l'élévation de onze à quinze pour cent des droits de douane *ad valorem* en Turquie. Ainsi qu'à l'établissement de nouveaux monopoles ou au prélèvement de surtaxes de consommation sur les 5 articles suivants : pétrole, papier à cigarettes, allumettes, alcools, cartes à jouer. Tout cela à condition qu'un même traitement soit appliqué simultanément et sans distinction aux importations des autres pays. En tant qu'il s'agit de l'importation d'articles faisant l'objet d'un monopole, l'administration de ces monopoles est tenue de se fournir d'articles de provenance autrichienne ou hongroise suivant le pourcentage établi sur la base de l'importation annuelle de ces mêmes articles, pourvu que les prix à offrir pour la livraison des articles de monopole se conforment à la situation du marché au moment de l'achat, tout en prenant en considération les qualités des marchandises à fournir et la moyenne des prix qui ont été notés dans les trois dernières années pour les dites qualités. Il est en outre entendu que, si la Turquie, au lieu d'établir de nouveaux monopoles sur les cinq articles susmentionnés, se décidait à les frapper de surtaxes de consommation, ces surtaxes seraient imposées dans la même hauteur aux produits similaires de la Turquie et de toute autre nation.

“ Article VII. Reconnaissant le droit régalien du gouvernement ottoman sur le service des postes, le gouvernement commun d'Autriche-Hongrie s'engage à supprimer dès la ratification du présent acte les offices postaux impériaux-royaux fonctionnant actuellement en Turquie dans des localités où il n'existe pas d'autres bureaux de poste étrangères [*sic*]. Il s'engage en outre à supprimer également les autres offices postaux impériaux-royaux dans l'empire ottoman au fur et à mesure que les puissances ayant des bureaux de poste en Turquie auront supprimé les leurs.

“ Article VIII. La Sublime Porte se proposant d'ouvrir en conférence européenne ou autrement avec les grandes puissances intéressées des négociations en vue de faire

cesser le régime capitulaire en Turquie en les [sic] remplaçant par le régime du droit international, l'Autriche-Hongrie en reconnaissant le bien fondé de ces intentions de la Sublime Porte déclare dès maintenant vouloir lui prêter à cet effet son plein et sincère appui.

“Article IX. Le présent protocole sera ratifié et entrera en vigueur immédiatement après l'échange des ratifications. Les ratifications en seront échangées à Constantinople aussitôt que faire se pourra et au plus tard dans deux mois.”

[Fait en double expédition à Constantinople, le 26 février 1909.]

(L.S.) GABRIEL NORADOUNGHIAN, *m.p.*
 (L.S.) PALLAVICINI, *m.p.*
 (L.S.) H. HILMY, *m.p.*]

MINUTES.

Art[icle] VIII is most disagreeable. It states that Turkey proposes to open negotiations for replacing the Capitulations by ordinary International law, and that Austria will give her full support.

J. A. C. T.

We shall no doubt be shortly asked to assent to the Customs Increase.

R. P. M.

In view of the recent Turkish pronouncement as to the continuation of the Bagdad Railway, it might be as well to ask Sir G. Lowther by telegram whether any negotiations are to his knowledge proceeding with the Germans in regard to the surplus of the ceded Revenues and to instruct him (as soon as he has reason to think that the Turks are likely to move in the matter) to explain, in a friendly way, that we are very anxious to avoid placing difficulties within the way of Turkish G[overnment]t about the raising of the customs dues and that we therefore hope that no proposal will be made unaccompanied with an assurance that the whole of the increase will go to the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t and not to (foreign) Compan(ies).⁽¹⁾

L. M.
 E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Use of round brackets indicates amendments in Mr. Mallet's minute by Sir E. Grey. The text of the protocol given above is that published in the *Fremdenblatt*. This has been checked with that given in G. Fr. de Martens: *Nouveau Recueil Général de Traités . . . Continuation . . . par Heinrich Triepel*, Leipzig (1910), 3rd ser., Vol. 2, pp. 661-4, from which the last sentence and signatures have been added. The text given is identical in substance with that published in Martens, except that the latter is the Austro-Hungarian version. There are some minor differences in capitalisation and punctuation. See also *B.F.S.P.*, Vol. 102, pp. 180-2.]

No. 623.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 7692/26/09/44.

(No. 16.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, February 27, 1909.

The Servian Chargé d'Affaires called at the Foreign Office on the 25th inst[ant] and handed to Sir C. Hardinge the accompanying document.⁽¹⁾

After reading it, Sir C. Hardinge observed that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had no cause to complain of the attitude of Servia during the last few weeks, and that he could only advise that the Servian Gov[ernmen]t should continue to maintain an attitude of prudence and reserve.

When M. Grouitch protested that the Servian Gov[ernmen]t had never done more than give expression to a legitimate agitation, Sir C. Hardinge said that certain speeches which had been made by high personages and by deputies in the Skuptchina had given deep provocation in Austria, and seemed to be the direct cause of the present strained relations.

On M. Grouitch alluding to the Servian Memorandum which the Russian Gov[ernmen]t had advised his Gov[ernmen]t to withdraw, Sir C. Hardinge said

⁽¹⁾ [For enclosure, *v. supra*, p. 626, No. 610.]

that, from what had been heard of its contents by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], it seemed a pity that the Servian Gov[ernment] should put forward demands which no self-respecting Great Power could possibly accept. It must be apparent to the Servian Gov[ernment] that the Russian Gov[ernment] could not press the acceptance of such demands without running the risk of war, and M. Iswolsky had stated, as M. Grouitch was aware, that the annexation would not be a *casus belli*.

Sir C. Hardinge added that I had told M. Milovanovitch in London that I should support Russia diplomatically, but not to the point of war. Sir C. Hardinge's personal advice therefore was that the Servian Gov[ernment] should not advance pretensions which, with a little common sense, they must realise could only be provocative towards Austria and could have no practical result except to make one step further towards war, which might be suicidal for Serbia.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 624.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, February 28, 1909.

F.O. 7921/26/09/44A.

D. 7.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 109.)

R. 9 P.M.

M. Isvolsky informed Servian Minister yesterday⁽¹⁾ of the step he had taken at Belgrade. I asked latter to-day what he thought his Government would answer. He said that he could not tell, announcement would be greatest deception to all Servians' hopes; that the Cabinet, fortunately, was a very strong one, composed of moderate men, but he did not know how they would receive a communication of so serious a nature; that Russian Ministry for Foreign Affairs had always led him to believe that territorial compensation would be accorded, but now that Russia had abandoned Serbia he did not know what his Government could or would do.

He much feared the effect on public opinion. There were no economic concessions which could be of any value, as a railway through Bosnian territory would not be accepted as it would merely mean placing service [Serbia] still more under Austrian domination, and a railway through Turkish territory was not compensation as it would probably have been obtained in any case. Servian Minister is a very reasonable man, but is most disheartened and uneasy.

⁽¹⁾ [The text of M. Isvolsky's telegram to Belgrade of same date is in *Siebert* (1921), pp. 235-6. *Cp.* Telegram No. 106, Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey of February 27, 1909, *supra*, pp. 636-7, No. 619.]

No. 625.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9756/26/09/44A.

St. Petersburg, D. February 28, 1909.

(No. 138.)

R. March 15, 1909.

Sir,

I remarked to M. Iswolsky yesterday that I believed that Prince Ferdinand of Bulgaria was leaving St. Petersburg that evening. His Excellency said that this was the case. I enquired whether he had had any interesting conversations with His Royal Highness. He replied that he had only spoken twice with Prince Ferdinand. The latter had given both the Emperor and himself the most positive assurances that there was no understanding of any kind between Bulgaria and

Austria-Hungary. M. Iswolsky said that he had remarked to Prince Ferdinand that if he said so, he was bound to believe him, but that he was obliged to add that many people thought otherwise. Prince Ferdinand had also given the Russian Government to understand that, in the event of a conflict between Austria-Hungary and Servia, Bulgaria would take no action against the latter country. He had been told that if Bulgaria were to do so, it would signify a definite rupture between Russia and her. I observed to M. Iswolsky that he did not appear to have absolute confidence in the assurances of Prince Ferdinand. He said that he had not: but that he thought that for a time at least His Royal Highness would act in accordance with them.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 626.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 7918/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 257.)

Foreign Office, March 1, 1909.

Your tel[egram] No. 106.⁽¹⁾

I am very glad to hear of line which Russia is taking; I realize how difficult it is for Iswolsky to say this at Belgrade, but I am sure it is the only means of preserving peace. You can assure him that we will do all we can to support concessions such as economic, which can be obtained by diplomatic means.

Repeat Paris, No. 165; Vienna, No. 84; Rome, No. 90; Constantinople, No. 146; Berlin, No. 59; Belgrade, No. 44.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 636-7, No. 619.]

No. 627.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 8238/26/09/44.

Tel. (No. 258.)

Foreign Office, March 1, 1909.

Russian Chargé d'Affaires has communicated to me advice which Russia is giving at Belgrade and has asked that we would support diplomatic efforts to secure economic concessions for Servia.⁽¹⁾ We strongly deprecated idea of Servia being left to settle with Austria alone.

I told him that I much appreciated the statesmanlike step which Iswolsky had taken; that I knew how difficult it was for him to advise Servia to renounce territorial claims, and that sacrifice now made by her gave her a strong moral claim on all the Powers to support her in securing the best settlement that could be obtained by diplomatic means. I promised our support to this.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 636-7, No. 619.]

No. 628.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 7923/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 48.)

Foreign Office, March 1, 1909.

D. 4.15 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 12, (of Feb[ruary] 27).⁽¹⁾

Your language approved.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 636, No. 618.]

No. 629.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 8239/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 1, 1909.

Tel. (No. 259.)

D. 5.45 P.M.

Prince Bülow has informed German Ambassador who has informed me that British Embassy is saying at St. Petersburg that it has received explicit telegrams with regard to negotiations conducted recently at Berlin to the effect that Herr von Schön after refusing to participate in demands at Vienna has communicated to Ambassadors of England France and Italy conditions under which alone Austria would be ready to return to normal relations; these are:—

1. Complete change of Servian Foreign Policy.
2. Disarmament.
3. Renunciation of compensation (not merely territorial).
4. Readiness to accept whatever solution Austria would offer.

British Embassy interprets this to mean that Germany follows Baron d'Aehrenthal implicitly, and that this complicates the situation for Serbia could not lose more after a campaign; that we are disappointed with German attitude after exchange of views at Berlin visit; that Baron d'Aehrenthal is bent at any price on using present condition of affairs and comparative weakness of Russia in order to make Austrian preponderance felt in the Balkans.

German Gov[ernment] regard this action of Embassy as not consonant with my promise to cooperate in any proposals likely to be acceptable to promote peace.

German Ambassador assumed that Prince Bülow's information was from a reliable source at St. Petersburg.

I have replied that of course such statements would not be consistent with confidential communications between us and that it was quite incredible that any such language had been disseminated by British Embassy. I would telegraph it to you, but it was the work of some mischief maker and I hoped after I had done what I could to clear it up and had got your reply Prince Bülow would do his utmost to find out where the discredit for circulating such a report originated.

No. 630.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 8240/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 1, 1909.

Tel. (No. 260.)

D. 6 P.M.

German Ambassador asked me today whether I had any news: I told him confidentially of Russian action at Belgrade⁽¹⁾ and said that in my opinion this should not only encourage but also establish a moral claim upon other Powers including Germany to do what they could as they had influence and opportunity to promote a favourable settlement on basis of economic concessions to Serbia.⁽²⁾

Ambassador speaking personally thought Austria might feel that other Powers had no *locus standi* with regard to Servian claims and might decide to settle them alone with Serbia direct.

I replied that technically this might hold good if the point was an isolated one, but it had to be considered as part of the whole difficulty of the Near East. For

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 636-7, No. 619.]

raising this as a whole Austria was to blame her action had caused us all an infinity of diplomatic trouble for nearly six months. Russian action at Belgrade had now brought a possible settlement of the whole within sight and it would be too bad if Austria spoilt it in a point of form of *amour-propre*.

Russian Chargé d'Affaires particularly asked today for our support on these lines with Germany.

No. 631.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 1, 1909.

F.O. 8177/26/69/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 110.)

R. 9.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 254.⁽¹⁾

Although M. Isvolsky had taken his step at Belgrade as reported in my telegram No. 106,⁽²⁾ before I received above telegram, I thought it would give him some encouragement if I read to him certain portions of it, and I showed him how well justified he was in what he had done. He was pleased, and said that he had heard step which he had taken had made a good effect in London. He is most anxious that Serbia should not be induced to enter into direct negotiations with Austria, and he is most strongly of opinion that the latter should be held to her engagement, that advantages to be accorded to Serbia and Montenegro should be matter to be treated among all the Signatory Powers so long as they were limited, as they now would be, to advantages of an economic character. I said he could be assured His Majesty's Government would support him in this, but it would be of use if you would authorize me to say so as coming direct from you.

MINUTES.

As to Austrian views on programme of Conference see 45345/08.⁽³⁾ It seems to me that however much the Powers may discuss these economic advantages they must chiefly be settled by Austria. What we ought to be told is what Russia would accept for Serbia and what Austria would give.

J. A. C. T.

Austria is at all events bound to allow discussion of the Economic advantages at the Conference.

R. P. M.

Austria agreed to discuss the economic advantages to be procured for Serbia and Montenegro at a Conference but she only agreed to a Conference if a preliminary accord was reached by the Powers on the points to be referred to it. We understand that Russia will propose to the Powers to communicate to Vienna the Servian answer and the Powers might then remind Vienna of her promise and ask what economic advantages she proposes to give to Serbia.

Tel[egram] to inform Sir A. Nicolson.

L. M.

I have drafted a telegram.

F. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 637-8, No. 621.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 636, No. 619.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 538-40, No. 491.]

No. 632.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 8178/26/09/44A.

St. Petersburg, March 1, 1909.

Tel. (No. 111.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

French Ambassador communicated to-day fresh formula to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, which the French Government suggest should be communicated to Belgrade by the Powers.

Minister for Foreign Affairs took objection to several points in it: the principal objections were, so I understood, that the Powers could not inform Serbia officially of an act between Austria and Turkey before they had had themselves official cognizance of it, and that to say that a new situation had in fact been created without any reservation that the new situation must be submitted to approval of all the Signatory Powers was dangerous. Again, he pointed out to endeavour to obtain from Serbia an assurance that she would have no territorial aspirations outside her present frontiers was going too far.

Every country had a right to have aspirations, and perhaps in the future Serbia might wish to have some frontier rectifications with Turkey and would not tie her hands in the way suggested. These were the chief objections which occurred to him on a first hasty reading. Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs is being much irritated against the French Government, and it is difficult to see why any formula is for the moment necessary, as, if Serbia accepts the advice tendered to her by the Russian Government to abandon desire for territorial compensation, no further formula would seem to be required.

MINUTES.

As Sir A. Nicolson says there seems to be no need for the proposed formula.

J. A. C. T.
R. P. M.

It is very clumsy of the French to be so persistent.

The communication is apparently that which was telegraphed by M. Jules Cambon to his brother the other day and M. Isvolsky's objection is the same as that advanced by Sir C. Hardinge namely that by communicating the Austro-Turkish Agreement to the Servian Gov[ernmen]t and asking them to accept it, we accept it ourselves and lose our only lever with Austria.

Inform Sir A. Nicolson that you concur with M. Isvolsky in thinking the French proposal objectionable.

L. M.

⁽¹⁾ [Endorsed by Sir E. Grey "Repeat to Paris and tell Sir F. Bertie that the objections here quoted seem to be valid, but that he need say nothing unless asked for our views.—E. G." This was done by Telegram No. 170 to Sir F. Bertie of March 2, 1909, and repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 263, *cp.* also Telegram No. 171 to Sir F. Bertie, *infra*, p. 648, No. 638.]

No. 633.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 8639/26/09/44.

Tel. (No. 45.) R.

Foreign Office, March 1, 1909.

Servian Chargé d'Affaires presented on Saturday a mem[orandu]m defining the policy of the new Cabinet.⁽¹⁾

You should inform the Minister for F[oreign] A[ffairs] that we have received with satisfaction the pacific assurances of the Servian Gov[ernmen]t, and we take note of their declaration that they will await the decision of the Great Powers while avoiding with care any measure likely to provoke a conflict with Austria.

⁽¹⁾ [v. following document, *encl.*]

No. 634.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 8639/26/09/44.

(No. 17.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 1, 1909.

The Servian Ch[argé] d'Aff[aires] called at this Office on the 27th ult[imo] and handed to Sir C. Hardinge the memo[randum] of which a copy is inclosed.

After reading it Sir C. Hardinge told M. Grouitch that the memo[randum] was satisfactory from the point of view of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] but that it was unfortunate that it included the phrase describing the dilemma in which Serbia would be placed by the Austrian press campaign. Such language could serve no useful purpose and would prevent H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] from communicating the memo[randum] to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] as a serious guarantee of Serbia's pacific intentions.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY].

Enclosure in No. 634.

*Memorandum.**February 27, 1909.*

Le nouveau Ministère serbe⁽¹⁾ continuera la politique du Cabinet auquel il a succédé; son attitude sera entièrement semblable à celle du Gouvernement précédent, c'est-à-dire qu'il cherchera à obtenir par des voies pacifiques la satisfaction des besoins et intérêts vitaux serbes; par suite, il attendra la décision des Grandes Puissances, en évitant avec soin tout ce qui pourrait donner lieu à un conflit armé entre la Serbie et l'Autriche-Hongrie. En outre, demeurant fidèle aux promesses données aux Grandes Puissances, le Gouvernement serbe ne prendra aucunes mesures militaires ultérieures du côté de la frontière austro-hongroise—malgré le fait que l'Autriche-Hongrie ne cesse de concentrer des troupes du côté de la Serbie et malgré la campagne organisée dans les journaux austro-hongrois et dont l'objet est de placer la Serbie dans le dilemme suivant: la guerre ou la honte avec le sacrifice de l'indépendance. Afin d'éviter de donner la moindre raison et même le moindre prétexte à l'Autriche-Hongrie, le Gouvernement serbe a renouvelé les ordres déjà donnés aux autorités frontières en leur enjoignant de la manière la plus stricte de faire tout ce qui leur est possible pour prévenir et éviter, à tout prix, des conflits sur la frontière et pour maintenir sur la frontière l'ordre le plus rigoureux.

*Légation Royale de Serbie, Londres,**le 27 février 1909.*

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 616, *Ed. note.*]

No. 635.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 8238/26/09/44.

(No. 84.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 1, 1909.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires came to tell me to-day that M. Iswolsky was advising the Servians to renounce their territorial claims upon Austria, to leave their case for economic concessions in the hands of the Powers, and meanwhile to abstain from all military measures which could give any provocation.

M. Iswolsky hoped we would support the demand for economic concessions. Russia could not agree that Serbia should be left alone to get what she could from Austria, and he feared that Austria might be hoping to follow the precedent of the

negotiations with Turkey and deal alone with Servia. In such a case, Servia would be unable to secure good terms for herself.

I said I much appreciated the statesmanlike attitude of M. Iswolsky. I knew it must have been difficult for him to advise Servia to renounce territorial claims; but the sacrifice which Russia had made gave her a moral claim upon the support of all the Powers in securing a satisfactory settlement. I was already telegraphing to you to promise our full support for such economic concessions as could be obtained by diplomatic means.

M. Poklevski asked me whether I thought Servia would accept the Russian advice.

I said I did not think she could be so mad as to refuse to accept it. Territorial compensation could be obtained for her only as the result of a big war, which would have to be as decided in its success as the war which enabled Prussia to wrest territory from France. Servia could not gain any territory by anything short of such a war. In any other event, even if she retained her independence, her country would have been overrun and ruined for a time, and numbers of her people killed. M. Iswolsky had taken the only possible course which could secure peace.

M. Poklevski asked me whether, if Servia did renounce her territorial claims, a Conference might not be summoned at once. There was still the question of Montenegro to be discussed. But if Austria would not give up Spizza, perhaps she would agree to dismantle the fortifications, on some understanding that in return Antivari should not be fortified.

I told him that, if the territorial claims of Servia were put on one side, it seemed to me that we should be ripe for a Conference. I heard that Austria was about to communicate to the Powers her Protocol with Turkey. We could not recognize this separately and individually, and the recognition should take place at a Conference, or should be made by the Powers all together.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 636.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 2, 1909.

F.O. 8288/26/09/44A.

D. 1:50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 55.)

R. 3:10 P.M.

Hungarian Prime Minister, during speech last night in the Upper House on annexation policy of Austro-Hungarian Government, made use of following words: "The question is exclusively one between ourselves and Servia and one therefore in which no third party has a right to interfere."

His Excellency employed identical words in the earlier part of his speech in alluding to relations with Turkey.

Semi-official "Fremden-Blatt" in leading article this morning gives expression to the same sentiment concluding with words "the Servian question is no European question but a purely private concern of Austria-Hungary."

No. 637.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 8177/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1909.

Tel. (No. 262.)

D. 4:40 P.M.

Your telegram No. 110.⁽¹⁾ You may certainly promise our diplomatic support for this purpose. I feel strongly that Russia having done her part for peace Austria

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 644, No. 631.]

should respond by being equally conciliatory. An expectation to this effect can be based on the Austrian answer to Russia of November 14.⁽²⁾ In this Austria stipulated for a preliminary accord between the Powers, she declared herself quite disposed for an exchange of views on the various heads of the programme; she proposed that point 7 should be worded "Economic advantages to be obtained for Serbia and Montenegro." It appears therefore that if Serbia renounces territorial claims Austria should now be prepared to come to a preliminary accord with the Powers as to what these economic advantages should be. If M. Iswolsky approves of this line I will adhere to it in communications with other Powers.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 539, No. 491.]

No. 638.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 8178/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1909.

Tel. (No. 171.)

D. 5.30 P.M.

Russia having now done her part at Belgrade in interest of peace at no little risk to her own popularity there it is clearly for Austria to respond by showing a conciliatory spirit and being ready to come to an accord with the Powers about economic advantages to Serbia and Montenegro thus following the procedure indicated in her own reply to Russia of November 14.⁽¹⁾ You should inform M. Pichon that this is my view and ask what he thinks.

Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 264.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 539, No. 491.]

No. 639.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 8293/26/09/44A.

Vienna, March 2, 1909.

Tel. (No. 56.)

D. 5.50 P.M.

R. 6.55 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

French Ambassador informs me that Baron von Aehrenthal, while recognizing that he shares views expressed by Hungarian Prime Minister in the Hungarian Parliament yesterday, regrets that public attention should have been drawn to them at this moment.

As regards Conference, French Ambassador tells me German Ambassador has spoken to various people very strongly against its meeting.

MINUTE.

This has crossed our No. 87 to Vienna.⁽²⁾

R. P. M.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 647, No. 636.]

(²) [*v. infra*, p. 649, No. 642.]

No. 640.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir C. Greene.

F.O. 8182/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1909.

Tel. (No. 6.)

D. 5.50 P.M.

If there is any question of receiving Prince Ferdinand as King, you should not allow yourself to be placed in any position which will compromise us as H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] cannot recognize Bulgarian independence until Turkey consents and an agreement is come to between the Powers.

No. 641.

*Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.**Belgrade, March 2, 1909.*

F.O. 8296/26/09/44A.

D. 6 P.M.

Tel. (No. 14.)

R. 8 P.M.

Your telegram No. 46.⁽¹⁾

Russian Minister this morning gave Servian Government advice mentioned in Sir A. Nicolson's telegram No. 106,⁽²⁾ and with his consent I have endorsed it.

Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that, pending consultation with Cabinet, he had personally given following reply: Serbia submitted to the wishes of the Powers, and would not advance territorial demands. She consented to keep silent on the subject, and would endeavour to maintain normal relations with Austria-Hungary, but could not be expected to make a formal declaration renouncing all such claims for the future, and reserved her right to place her point of view before the Conference if it met. As regards economic concessions, she desired none from Austria-Hungary, and would certainly not enter into direct negotiations with a view to obtaining them.

His Excellency had promised to give Russian Minister definite answer of Servian Government to-morrow morning, probably in the above sense, and said he would communicate it to me immediately afterwards. French and Italian Ministers are also supporting Russian advice by instructions from their Governments.

In the course of conversation Minister for Foreign Affairs said that if Austria presented an ultimatum Serbia would not reply, but put (?) themselves in the hands of the Powers, and inform Austria that they had done so. In these circumstances I did not act on your telegram No. 39,⁽³⁾ especially as Russian Minister thinks it now unnecessary. French Minister has no instructions.

With regard to defensive military measures Minister for Foreign Affairs said that, if Austria reduced her forces on the frontiers or if Serbia could obtain a guarantee that Austria would not attack her, Servian Government would gladly for financial reasons send home all reservists. I asked him what he meant by a guarantee, and understood that a formal declaration that Austria would not attack Serbia except under great provocation would suffice.

His Excellency told me he was doing all he could to moderate tone of Belgrade press.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It gave sanction for British support of Russian advice if desired by Russian Minister.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp 636-7, No. 619.]

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced. It gave instructions as to advice to be given to the Servian Government, if France and Russia concurred.]

No. 642.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 8288/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 2, 1909.

Tel. (No. 87.)

D. 6 P.M.

Your telegram No. 55.⁽¹⁾ The language described is inconsistent with Austrian reply to Russian Gov[ernmen]t of November 14,⁽²⁾ and if Russian Gov[ernmen]t take up the point on this ground we must support them. See print South Eastern Europe, Confidential, December 25, Section I.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 647, No. 636.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 539, No. 491.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 8774/26/09/44.

(No. 36.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 2, 1909.

The Austrian Ambassador told me to-day he had nothing definite to communicate to me, but Baron d'Aehrenthal was preparing a communication to the Powers about the Agreement between Austria and Turkey, which I should probably receive soon. He expected I should hear something from you.

We then spoke about the step which Russia had taken at Belgrade.

I said I hoped it would be felt that Russia had made a real effort for peace by the advice which she had given at Belgrade, and that the Austrian Government would recognise this and respond by showing an equally conciliatory spirit with regard to what remained to be settled.

Count Mensdorff said that his idea was that Austria would require direct assurances from Serbia, and what he called a "moral guarantee" that she would renounce both territorial and political claims, (by the latter he meant the demand for the autonomy of Bosnia and Herzegovina), and would live on terms of good neighbourliness with Austria. When this was done, Austria would enter into direct negotiations with Serbia about economic concessions. But Austria must first have a real assurance, direct from Serbia, that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was recognised and accepted, and that Serbia was not intending, a few months hence, to make trouble for Austria on her frontier.

Count Mensdorff told me that he was not charged to make any communication to me about this, and he was not speaking officially. But he understood Baron d'Aehrenthal had seen the Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Vienna yesterday, and had probably spoken to him in this sense.

I said that of course Austria would expect an assurance that Serbia was not going to cause trouble, and that her renunciation of territorial claims was *bona fide*. With regard to the manner in which Austria was to be assured, we must wait till we knew what reply the Servians gave to the Russian advice at Belgrade.

I then told Count Mensdorff that, of course, I did not wish to anticipate difficulties, and that I must not be regarded as speaking to him officially, or committing myself to any definite view. But, if the Servian reply was satisfactory, and if Austria announced that the other Powers were not to concern themselves about the economic concessions which were to be made to Serbia, and that the matter was to be discussed between Austria and Serbia alone, I should regard the situation not only with disappointment, but with despair.

In her note of November 14,⁽¹⁾ Austria had stipulated for a preliminary agreement before a Conference met, and had declared herself quite ready to enter upon an exchange of views with regard to the several points of the programme we had suggested, and Austria herself had proposed for the wording of the seventh point of this programme: "economic advantages to be obtained for Serbia and Montenegro." If Austria were now to go back upon the attitude she had then taken up, I should despair of European politics.

Count Mensdorff argued that the other points of this programme had concerned the Powers who were parties to the Treaty of Berlin in a way which concessions for Serbia and Montenegro did not concern them.

I pointed out to him that these Near Eastern questions must be looked upon as a whole. If Russia could succeed in removing the difficulty of principle with regard to Serbia and Montenegro, then a settlement of the whole of these questions would be in sight. I hoped Austria was not going to spoil this whole settlement by now raising an objection on a point of form which she had never raised last autumn.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 539, No. 491.]

But I again reminded Count Mensdorff that it was not for me to make an official communication on these questions before Baron d'Aehrenthal had expressed himself, and that I regarded our conversation this afternoon as informal and unofficial.

Count Mensdorff asked me whether I still adhered to the idea of a Conference.

I replied that we must have some definite idea upon which to work. Austria had stipulated for a preliminary accord before a Conference. We were now in the stage, or at least I hoped approaching the stage, when we should be able to discuss a preliminary accord on all points. If that accord could, fortunately, be made so complete that the word "preliminary" might be omitted, the Powers could then decide upon the manner in which it would be desirable to put on record their agreement.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 644.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 3, 1909.

F.O. 8465/26/09/44A.

D. 4.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 114.)

E. 5.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 260.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky is grateful to you for your promised support, which, in view of obstinate attitude which Austria seems inclined to adopt, will be of the greatest service. He says your point of view is quite identical with his own, and he is quite in accordance with line which you propose.

I may add that, with the exception of "Novoe Vremya," the step which he took at Belgrade is being severely attacked by press here of all shades.

He thinks perhaps it would be well if Serbia were to address a Circular to all the Powers, including Austria, if she is disposed to accept advice tendered by Russia, but, as he observed, such a Circular would have to be very carefully worded.

His news from Belgrade gives him the impression that reply of Servian Government will be satisfactory, and it is possible that she will say she does not want any territorial compensations or concessions from Austria, but leaves her fate in the hands of Powers.

His main desire remains as before that Austria should be pressed to carry out her engagement that the question of advantages to Serbia and Montenegro should be discussed amongst all the Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 643-4, No. 630.]

No. 645.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 8296/26/09/44A.

Belgrade, March 3, 1909.

Tel. (No. 51.)

D. 6 P.M.

Your telegram No. 14.⁽¹⁾ Any reference to future claims would of course spoil the reply for purposes of communication at Vienna and you can express this opinion in any further discussions.

Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 266, March 3, 1909.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 649, No. 641.]

No. 646.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9759/26/09/44A.

(No. 142.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 3, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 15, 1909.

M. Iswolsky, whom I saw to-day, was grateful for the diplomatic support which you have been good enough to promise him in inducing the Austro-Hungarian Government to act in a conciliatory manner, and to give effect to the engagement which they had previously taken that the economic compensations to be accorded to Servia and Montenegro were, with the other points of the Conference programme, to be a matter for discussion among the Powers.⁽¹⁾ His Excellency was of opinion that your support would be much required both at Berlin and at Vienna in preventing Austria-Hungary from endeavouring to treat the above question as one affecting herself and Servia alone. On this point M. Iswolsky is tenacious.

He was not at all pleased with the article which appeared in the "Fremdenblatt," which indicated that Austria-Hungary intended to be obstinate in insisting that Servia should make her surrender at Vienna, and then await the decision as to what concessions the Austro-Hungarian Government might be pleased to grant. It was clear, he thought, that Baron d'Aehrenthal wished to pass over the heads of the Powers on that point.

I asked him if he had received any reply from the Servian Government. He answered in the negative; but that the impressions which the Russian Representative had gathered were not unfavourable. He would not be surprised if the Servian Government were to state that they desired no territorial or economic concessions from Austria-Hungary, but were content to leave their fate in the hands of the Powers.

The Russian press, with the exception of the "Novoe Vremya," is vehement in its attacks on M. Iswolsky for the step which he has taken at Belgrade, which, in various phraseology, it characterises as a capitulation to Austria-Hungary and a sacrifice of the prestige of Russia. It is unnecessary for me to comment on the injustice and short-sightedness of these attacks. The article of the "Fremdenblatt" has been ill-received and it is seized upon as a proof of how little the action of M. Iswolsky has been appreciated at Vienna as a conciliatory step making for peace, but that it has been treated, as it was natural that it should be treated, as signifying a confession of the weakness of Russia, and as encouraging Vienna to advance still more imperious and exacting demands. The attacks on M. Iswolsky are, therefore, redoubled: and even his solitary champion the "Novoe Vremya" acknowledges that after the expression of Austrian official opinion it is clear that his labours have been in vain.

M. Iswolsky has, however, the consolation, to which he is rightly entitled, of knowing that he has taken a step which has been welcomed by all who are striving for peace; and that in France there are signs that opinion is coming round to the view that Austria-Hungary is the Power which is really endangering the peace of Europe. If I may be allowed to say so, it has been a cause of sincere satisfaction to M. Iswolsky that not only have you promised him the valuable diplomatic support of His Majesty's Government, but that you have recognised and appreciated the sacrifice which he made in boldly counselling Servia to abandon claims to which she had closely clung and which were cordially supported by public opinion in Russia. He knew that he would be rebuked and upbraided by the press of his country, and would lose much in public esteem: but he deliberately faced this situation in his earnest desire to do what he could towards securing a pacific solution. Whether his efforts may fail or succeed, I venture to think that M. Iswolsky adopted a statesmanlike and courageous attitude in a very difficult situation.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 647-8, No. 637.]

No. 647.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 8489/26/09/44A.

(No. 55.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 3, 1909.

Count Metternich observed to me to-day that there had been an article in the "Fremden Blatt" which was an indication of the view which the Austrian Government would take of the Servian question.

I told him I had seen this article, and also a speech by the Hungarian Prime Minister, but I had not heard anything direct from the Austrian Government.

Count Metternich gave me to understand that the Austrian view would be that Serbia should renounce territorial claims and give peaceful assurances, and ask Austria direct what economic concessions she was prepared to make. Austria would then deal direct with Serbia. As the ally of Austria, the German Government would be obliged to take this attitude of Austria into account in any further negotiations.

I replied that it was not for me to say anything officially till I heard from the Austrian Government direct what their attitude was to be. Indeed, I could not discuss the matter at all, except hypothetically, till I knew what the Servian answer would be to the Russian advice, and what the view of the Russian Government with regard to that answer would be. But I understood from Count Metternich that Austria intended to say that the question of economic concessions for Serbia was one which concerned Austria and Serbia alone, as two independent States, and in which no other Powers should intervene.

Count Metternich assented to this description.

I told him that I thought such an attitude would be most unfortunate. Last autumn Austria, while stipulating for a preliminary accord, had expressed herself as entirely disposed to discuss with the other Powers not only the heads but the substance of a programme for a Conference; and she had herself defined one of the heads of this programme as "economic advantages to be obtained for Serbia and Montenegro." She would be taking a great responsibility if, at the last moment, when there was a prospect of settling the whole of the Near Eastern difficulty completely, she were to recede from the position she had taken up last autumn.

Count Metternich contended that the question of concessions from Austria to Serbia was not one which really concerned the other Powers. Austria was entitled to insist upon direct negotiations with Serbia. If Serbia refused to accept this position another deadlock would ensue.

I said it would be most unfortunate if Austria now took objection to a point of form to which she had not taken any objection last autumn, and which in fact she had then decided favourably. Last week, the point of deadlock had been that Serbia would not renounce territorial claims. If, owing to the action of the Russian Government, this point of deadlock was removed, it would really be too bad if Austria created another point of deadlock by going back upon the attitude she had taken up last autumn. The Austrian position as I now understood it from Count Metternich went a good deal beyond the position indicated in the German reply given to us lately, and beyond the position as I had gathered it to be from conversations with Count Metternich last week. (Count Metternich did not demur to this statement.) Surely, if Serbia said that she felt herself too weak to negotiate with Austria alone and therefore desired to put her case in the hands of the Powers, that would be a reasonable position.

Count Metternich still considered that the Powers had no right to intervene between Austria and Serbia.

I urged that it was not merely a question between Austria and Serbia alone, but a question of preserving the peace of Europe. We had all of us signed something at The Hague, to the effect that an offer of mediation from any Power was not to be regarded as an offence, and if Serbia asked for the mediation of the other Powers I did not see how Austria could resent it.

Count Metternich said that, supposing Serbia was willing to approach Austria direct, to say that she renounced territorial claims and wished for economic concessions, surely there could be no objection to this procedure. He added, speaking entirely unofficially and on his own account, that he would observe that if the offers which Austria made in reply to the Servian request were not satisfactory, Serbia would have time to consult Russia and the other Powers on the subject.

I replied that we could not judge of this till we knew what the Servian attitude was going to be, what her reply to the Russian advice would be, and what view the Russian Government would take of the reply.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 648.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, March 4, 1909.

F.O. 8489/26/09/44A.

D. 12.34 A.M.

Tel. (No. 20.)

R. 1 A.M.

Austria and Serbia.

On attending the Sec[retary] of State for F[oreign] A[ffairs]'s reception to-day I found H[is] E[xc]ellency very depressed. He said Russian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]'s communication to Servian Gov[ernmen]t had raised his hopes but that he must confess that Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]'s unapproachable attitude with regard to other Powers and his determination to regard question as one concerning Austria-Hungary and Serbia alone seemed not unlikely to create further difficulties. I said that what Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] seemed entirely to ignore was that it was impossible for other Powers to regard as out of their purview a question which contained elements of a common danger to Europe. I was sure that the German Gov[ernmen]t realised this and it seems to me that an ally who might be implicated had the right to say a word on the subject to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t.

Sec[retary] of State said that practically it was an European question but that politically it was not. Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] evidently regarded question from the political standpoint. Personally he regretted this and he must admit Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs]'s obstinacy on this point put the German Gov[ernmen]t in difficult position.

I asked H[is] E[xc]ellency if I was to infer from this that if Servian assurances in answer to Russian Note were satisfactory German Gov[ernmen]t would have difficulty in joining in supporting them at Vienna. He replied evasively that all he knew for certain was that Austria-Hungary wished to negotiate with Serbia alone without the interference of the Powers.

I have since heard that idea of German Foreign Office is that Germany should only support Servian assurances at Vienna if they are made to her direct and not through the medium of another Power.

No. 649.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 4, 1909.

F.O. 8573/26/09/44A.

D. 5.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 58.)

R. 6.45 P.M.

Servia.

Mr. Whitehead's telegram No. 14.⁽¹⁾

I inquired of Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day what were his views as to the recent action taken by Russia and the Powers at Belgrade. He replied that he was very pleased with it and that it was a step in the right direction. He hoped

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 649, No. 641.]

that the Powers would continue to use their friendly offices at Belgrade to bring about a better disposition towards Austria.

His Excellency had not yet received full reply of the Servian Government to the Russian representations, but his information showed that it was fairly satisfactory. He saw in it a desire on the part of the Servian Government to conform to the wishes of the Powers.

He said that he could not expect Servian politicians suddenly to renounce their past policy, and time was required to give them a possibility of (?) honourably changing their views with regard to Austria. Patience was required by Austria, and his Excellency authorized me to assure you that he would make use of no sudden or violent action against Servia. His Excellency added that he did not wish to humiliate Servia, but sooner or later Servian Government must by some public act show that they desired to live on a friendly footing with Austria-Hungary.

I think that Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs contemplates putting pressure on Servia by means of threat of non-renewal of Commercial Treaty, which expires on 31st March.

No. 650.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, March 4, 1909.

F.O. 8572/26/09/44A.

D. 6.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 15.)

R. 8 P.M.

Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs dictated to me to-day his reply to Russian representations, and I am sending it by bag.⁽¹⁾

It was communicated yesterday in draft form to the Russian Minister, who telegraphed it to St. Petersburg, and Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day heard from Servian Minister there that M. Isvolsky approves, and that Sir A. Nicolson has also seen it.

Terms of reply are approximately as described in my telegram No. 14 of 2nd March,⁽²⁾ but reservations of Servia's right to present her point of view to the Powers at some future date is made conditional on Bosnian question being considered by them to be a European and not a purely Austro-Turkish one.

I pointed out objections to his reservation mentioned in your telegram No. 51 of yesterday.⁽³⁾ but His Excellency thought above condition, being an explicit statement that Servia will submit to the decision of the Powers, would sufficiently meet them.

Reply will take form of a Circular note to all the Signatory Powers of Treaty of Berlin, including Austria-Hungary, and you will probably receive it to-morrow or the next day from Servian Chargé d'Affaires in London.

MINUTES.

Await note.

J. A. C. T.
R. P. M.

The meaning of para[graph] 3 is not quite clear.

Perhaps it is explained as follows: "The Servian Government considers that if, in the opinion of the Powers, the Austro-Turkish Agreement suffices to settle the question raised by the annexation of Bosnia, Servia, for its part, has nothing to say. If, on the contrary, the Powers hold that international negotiation has been rendered necessary by the change which that annexation has brought about in the stipulations of the Treaty of Berlin, Servia abides by the wisdom of the Powers. For the rest Servia asks no concessions, political or economic, from Austria."

L. M.

We must await full text of the note.

E. G.

(1) [*v. infra*, pp. 659-60, No. 653, *encl.* 2. The final form of the reply is given in a communication from M. Gruic of March 10, *infra*, p. 666, No. 662.]

No. 651.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 8489/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 4, 1909.

Tel. (No. 64.) R.

D. 7 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. (of March 4).⁽¹⁾

Your language approved.

German Amb[assado]r yesterday referred to article in "Fremden Blatt," indicating that Austria would expect Serbia to renounce territorial claims, give peaceful assurances and ask her what economic concessions she was prepared to make. Austria would then deal with Serbia direct. Germany as her ally must take this attitude into account.

I said I could only discuss matter hypothetically until I heard direct from Austria and knew Serbia's answer and the impression made by it on Russia. But if Austria's attitude was that question of economic concessions concerned her and Serbia alone and no other Powers should intervene, it was most unfortunate. In note of Nov[ember] 14⁽²⁾ Austria had expressed readiness to discuss with the other Powers the substance of programme for Conference and definition "economic advantages" in one of the heads was hers. She would be taking great responsibility if when there was prospect of settling whole Near Eastern question she receded from position then taken, especially when the deadlock created by Serbia's territorial claims had been removed by Russia. Austria was going further now than I had gathered she would from the German reply and from what C[oun]t Metternich had said last week. C[oun]t Metternich did not demur to this. If Serbia felt too weak to negotiate alone it was reasonable she should put her case in the hands of the Powers. It was moreover a question of preserving the peace of Europe and if Serbia asked for mediation of Powers in sense of last Hague Conference Austria should not resent it.

Count Metternich did not abandon his contention that question was for Austria and Serbia.

Repeated to Vienna, (No. 93), and St. Petersburg, (No. 270).

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 654, No. 648.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 539, No. 491.]

No. 652.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 8601/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 4, 1909.

Tel. (No. 94.)

D. 7 P.M.

Austrian Ambassador has told me for my information that some of the Cabinets seemed to be of opinion that as soon as Serbia had dropped her claims to political compensations, Austria should be ready to enter into an exchange of views with the Powers with regard to the economic advantages which she would be ready to grant to Serbia: the argument being to the effect that Austria having agreed to the Article concerning "economic advantages to Serbia and Montenegro" being included in the programme of the Conference she should therefore discuss this point with the Powers.

To this the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t would like to reply that all the Powers including Russia approved of the *modus procedendi* suggested by Austria and agreed to by the Powers, viz., that the negotiations with regard to pending questions should in the first place be conducted between the Powers directly interested. That was how Austria proceeded in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the

unanimous approval of Europe, and she had to-day officially informed the Cabinets of her direct negotiations with Turkey.

She had intended adopting the same line of policy with regard to Servia on her renouncing her demands for political compensation and on her informing the Austrian Gov[ernment] of her willingness to adopt a correct attitude as a friendly neighbour and at the same time to cease arming.

The Austrian Gov[ernment] would be ready to settle the question of economic advantages which they are in a position to offer to Servia by way of direct negotiations between the two Governments concerned. As soon as this Agreement with the neighbouring kingdom had been concluded it could be referred to the other Powers.

They felt bound to point out that no other way of proceeding would be practicable, since the decision to which Austria as well as Servia could arrive at with regard to the economic questions in which the latter were concerned would be within the rights of State sovereignty and could not be made dependent upon the influence of third parties. Such questions were the Treaty of Commerce or the question of the junction of railways. This would of course not apply to questions of an international character as for instance the prolongation of the Danube-Adriatic railway or the position of Servia as "état riverain du Danube."

Ambassador insisted strongly that Austria must be assured that Servia would not stir up trouble again on the frontier in a few months' time. I observed that if Servia did not answer Russia favourably or if Servia herself preferred to negotiate direct with Austria a new situation would arise, but I gathered that the Servian reply to Russia would be favourable.

If Servia then declared that she was too weak to negotiate direct with Austria on equal terms and having under pressure renounced territorial claims desired to put her case in the hands of the Powers and asked their mediation or diplomatic intervention on her behalf, I hoped Austria would not create a new deadlock on a point of form. It would be most disappointing if she did so after Russian efforts had removed the deadlock about territorial claims which existed last week.

Austrian Ambassador assumes that renunciation of territorial claims includes claims of a political nature such as autonomy for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I told Ambassador that after Germany's hint that effectiveness of pressure at Belgrade depended upon Russian representation there, Russia might perfectly well have replied that she would not exercise this pressure till Austria stated her economic concessions. Austria should not take advantage of Russia having waived this point.

(Repeated to Berlin, No. 65; Paris, No. 175; Rome, No. 96; St. Petersburg, No. 271; Constantinople, No. 155; and Belgrade, No. 54.)

No. 653.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 8968/26/09/44A.

(No. 29.) Confidential.

Sir,

Belgrade, D. March 4, 1909.

R. March 8, 1909.

I have the honour to report that on the morning of the 2nd instant I endeavoured to arrange an interview with my Russian Colleague, and was told that he would call upon me after he had been to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. He did so, and told me that he had just seen Monsieur Milovanovitch and had given him Monsieur Iswolsky's message to the effect that he advised Servia to relinquish her claims for territorial compensation which the Powers were not disposed to support, to continue to maintain a peaceful attitude towards Austria-Hungary, and to leave her case in the hands of the Great Powers.

I explained to Monsieur Sergueieff the nature of my instructions as contained in your Telegram No. 46 of the 1st instant,⁽¹⁾ and asked whether he wished me to support

his representations. After a little apparent hesitation and some deprecatory remarks as to the responsibility which my question placed upon him, he said that although he believed his Government were averse to a collective representation he did not see that the support of other Powers could do any harm, and thought even that it might have a good effect. We accordingly agreed that I should see Monsieur Milovanovitch at once and support his representations. Monsieur Sergueieff told me that the Italian Minister had also received instructions in this matter and that he was on his way to see him about it.

As regards the instructions contained in your Telegram No. 39 of the 26th ultimo⁽²⁾ relative to the reply which the Servian Government should be advised to give in case of an Austrian ultimatum, Monsieur Sergueieff was of opinion that this was now superfluous, being covered by the later instructions, and so far as he was concerned, having been carried out in the course of previous conversations with Monsieur Milovanovitch. I agreed with this view, especially as the French Minister has received no instructions on the subject, and the condition stated in your Telegram last referred to has therefore not been fulfilled.

I accordingly called on the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and in the first place communicated to him the message contained in your Telegram No. 45 of the 1st instant,⁽³⁾ handing him an *Aide-mémoire*, of which I have the honour to enclose a copy.

I then said that having learnt that the Russian Government were advising Serbia to relinquish her claims for territorial compensation, you had authorized me to state that His Majesty's Government concurred in that advice, and that I had therefore come to support the communication which I understood the Russian Minister had just made to that effect.⁽⁴⁾

Monsieur Milovanovitch replied that he had not, of course, been able to give Monsieur Sergueieff a definite answer before consulting his colleagues in the Cabinet, but that personally and unofficially he had replied as follows:—Serbia submitted to the decision of the Powers and would not put forward her territorial demands. She consented to be silent on the subject, and to maintain normal relations with Austria-Hungary, but she could not be expected to make a formal declaration renouncing her claims for all time, and that she reserved her right to place her point of view before the Conference when it should meet. As regards economic concessions from Austria, Serbia desired none, and would certainly not enter into direct negotiations at Vienna in order to obtain them.

In the course of further conversation Monsieur Milovanovitch said that if the Austro-Hungarian Government caused the Commercial Treaty with Serbia to be passed by the two Parliaments and wished to proceed to the exchange of ratifications, Serbia would of course have no objection.⁽⁵⁾ but he repeated that she would not seek to obtain any economic concession which Austria might be disposed to grant of her own free-will, being convinced that they would never be such as to conduce to the independent development and strengthening of Serbia.

His Excellency told me that he had promised to give Monsieur Sergueieff the reply of the Servian Government on the following morning, and that he would come to me immediately afterwards. He did not, however, do so, and I only learnt when I met him in the evening that he had presented the reply. I called upon him by arrangement this morning, and he then dictated to me the text of the draft, copy of which I have the honour to enclose. It is in the form of a Circular to the Servian Representatives at the Capitals of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin, and his Excellency informed me that he proposed to send it to Vienna also. The text was telegraphed to St. Petersburg for approval, and while I was with him Monsieur Milovanovitch

(2) [Not reproduced.]

(3) [*v. supra*, p. 645, No. 633.]

(4) [*cp. Siebert* (1921), pp. 242-4.]

(5) [It was officially announced that Austria-Hungary would not ratify it on the 6th March.]

received a telegram from the Servian Minister there stating that Monsieur Isvolsky agreed to its terms, and that Sir A. Nicolson had also seen it and approved, particularly as to Servia not entering into direct negotiations with Austria-Hungary.

You will observe that the reservation made by the Servian Government of the right to present their point of view to the Powers at some future date, is made dependent on the question of the annexation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina being considered a European and not a purely Austro-Turkish one. In reference to this passage I communicated to Monsieur Milovanovitch the substance of Your Telegram No. 51 of yesterday.⁽⁶⁾ His Excellency replied that as Servia did not wish to ask for anything at Vienna, and as she explicitly stated that she would submit entirely and without reserve to the decision of the Powers, he did not think that the reservation in question could reasonably be considered to invalidate the Servian declaration.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

Enclosure 1 in No. 653.

Aide-mémoire.

His Britannic Majesty's Minister has the honour to inform H[is] E[xc]cellency the Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs that he has been instructed by his Government to state that they have received with satisfaction the pacific assurances of the Servian Government, as communicated in the Memorandum defining the policy of the new Cabinet, which was presented by the Servian Chargé d'Affaires on February 27.⁽⁷⁾

His Britannic Majesty's Government have taken note of the Declaration of the Servian Government that they will await the decisions of the Great Powers and will meanwhile carefully avoid any measure which would be likely to provoke a conflict with Austria-Hungary.

Belgrade, March 2, 1909.

Enclosure 2 in No. 653.

Proposed Circular to the Servian Representatives at the Capitals of the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin.

En se conformant aux conseils amicaux du Gouvernement Impérial de Russie, le Gouvernement Royal a l'honneur de vous communiquer la déclaration ci-après, qu'il vous prie de vouloir bien porter à la connaissance du Gouvernement auprès duquel vous êtes accrédité.

La Serbie considérant qu'au point de vue du droit sa situation à l'égard de l'Autriche-Hongrie après la proclamation de l'annexion de la Bosnie-Herzégovine est restée normale, n'a aucune intention de provoquer la guerre contre la Monarchie voisine et ne désire modifier en rien envers elle ses rapports juridiques⁽⁸⁾ et son attitude de voisin correct. Elle ne réclame non plus de l'Autriche-Hongrie, comme conséquence de la question bosno-herzégovinienne, absolument aucune compensation, soit territoriale, soit politique ou économique. En tant donc que la question bosno-herzégovinienne sera envisagée comme une question austro-hongroise d'ordre intérieur ou comme une question austro-turque, la Serbie s'abstiendra de toute immixtion. La Serbie a élevé sa voix et a marqué son point de vue dans cette question pour le temps et dans les limites où lui sera conservé le caractère d'une question européenne; et, par conséquent, si les Puissances Signataires du Traité de Berlin admettent que la question bosno-herzégovinienne est close par l'entente austro-turque ou si elles pour

⁽⁶⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 651, No. 645.]

⁽⁷⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 646, No. 634.]

⁽⁸⁾ [The first draft of 3rd March in *Siebert* (1921), pp. 243-44. After the words "rapports juridiques," certain alterations were made apparently at Russia's suggestion, *Siebert* (1921), p. 245. It was finally dated 10th March, and presented to Sir Edward Grey on that day or the next, *v. infra*, p. 666, No. 662. For Russian comments, *v. also infra*, pp. 671-2, No. 672, *enc1*.]

une raison quelconque ne veulent pas en ce moment statuer sur cette question, la Serbie en suivant leur exemple s'abstiendra à l'avenir de toute discussion à son égard. Si par contre les Puissances prennent en leurs mains l'examen de la question relative à la reconnaissance de l'annexion et à la nouvelle rédaction de l'Article XXV du Traité de Berlin, la Serbie leur soumettra comme au tribunal compétent l'exposé de son point de vue, se confiant entièrement et sans réserve à leur haute sagesse et équité.

Quant aux armements de la Serbie, ils ne se rattachent point à la question bosno-herzégoviniennne, mais s'effectuent en considération de nos besoins généraux, ce qui est prouvé déjà par le fait que ces armements se fondent sur les lois promulguées antérieurement à la proclamation de l'annexion.

Rélativement aux mesures militaires qui ont rapport à la préparation de la mobilisation et à la surveillance de la frontière du côté de l'Autriche-Hongrie, quoiqu'elles aient le caractère strictement défensif et soient réduites au minimum indispensable, la Serbie est prête à les suspendre et révoquer si l'Autriche-Hongrie est également disposée à rétablir l'état militaire normal du côté de la frontière serbe, ou si les Puissances veulent bien nous donner la garantie que l'Autriche-Hongrie ne nous attaquera pas.

Belgrade, ce 4 mars, 1909.

MINUTES.

We hope this note will be abandoned. It seems to me that one answer to the Servians would be that the question is not a purely Austro-Turkish one certainly but that the other parties directly interested are not the Servians but the Signatories of the Treaties of Berlin; the idea of the note is to put us in an *impasse*.

J. A. C. T.
R. P. M.

I agree but we must take the Russian point of view into account. The path is rendered easier by M. Isvolsky's moderation and his readiness to accept direct commercial negotiations.

L. M.
E. G.

No. 654.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 5, 1909.

F.O. 8692/26/09/44A.

D. 8.2 P.M.

Tel. (No. 121.)

R. 9 P.M.

Near East.

M. Isvolsky thinks that it would perhaps be best if Serbia were to address Circular to all the Powers, including Austria, stating that she wishes to be on good neighbourly relations with Austria; that she does not ask for any compensations, territorial, economic, or political; but that she does leave her case in the hands of the Powers. Serbia would thus have signified to Austria her compliance with Russian advice.

He thinks that in the present temper of Vienna Cabinet it would be useless for the Powers to address themselves to Vienna and transmit reply of Serbia, and so it would be a way out of the deadlock if the latter were to do so herself directly as she would at the same time to the other Powers. Passages in Servian reply as to how the annexation should be regarded, and as to disarmament, &c., had better be omitted. I believe M. Isvolsky will consult His Majesty's Government and the French Government before making above suggestion to Belgrade.

No. 655.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 8575/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 6, 1909.

Tel. (No. 97.)

D. 1.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 60 (of March 4, Berlin Treaty Conference).⁽¹⁾

The opinion I expressed was in favour of a preliminary accord between the Signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin to be arrived at by an exchange of views between them on the different points of the programme for a Conference and on the substance of the questions to which the different points of the programme refer. This is the procedure advocated by Austria in her note of last November and *aide-mémoire* of December.⁽²⁾ If Serbia puts her case in the hands of the Powers Austria cannot refuse to discuss it without abandoning her own position of last autumn. My opinion must not therefore be taken as favourable to the Austrian standpoint of discussion with Serbia direct and refusal to discuss with the Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 539-40, and p. 541, No. 491.]

No. 656.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 8692/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 6, 1909.

Tel. (No. 281.)

D. 1.25 P.M.

Your tel[egrams] Nos. 116⁽¹⁾ and 121⁽²⁾ (March 4 and 5 respectively—Austria and Servia).

Last sentence of first paragraph of Servian draft⁽³⁾ has an ambiguity, which might provoke inconvenient questions and it seemed to me that it would be better to omit last two paragraphs and let Austria raise the question of discontinuing armaments. But I think that Iswolsky's suggestion is better and that a new Circular to all the Powers containing these three direct unqualified statements, as described in your tel[egram] 121, should be drawn up instead of the draft now before us.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 660, No. 654.]⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 659, No. 653, *encl.* 2.]

No. 657.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 6, 1909.

F.O. 8850/26/09/44A.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 65.) Confidential.

R. 9.30 P.M.

On my speaking to Baron von Aehrenthal to-day of the successful action of Russia at Belgrade, I suggested that his Excellency should now seize the opportunity of (? meeting) Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs half-way. He expressed himself as pleased with Russian action, but declared with some vehemence that had only M. Iswolsky kept his engagements with Austria the present crisis would have terminated long ago. He did not directly allude to the Buchlau Protocol, but evidently had it in his mind.

According to his Excellency, Russia was trying to make the world believe that she had a right to act as the protectress of Servia. This was a mad claim, which his Excellency emphatically declared that Austria could never admit. It was this pretension, he added, which was retarding the (? settlement) of the Austro-Servian

No. 658.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 9198/26/09/44.

(No. 113.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 6, 1909.

M. Cambon brought to me to-day a communication from M. Pichon, of which a copy is inclosed (No. I). M. Iswolsky was of opinion that the Servian Note should be communicated by Servia herself to all the Powers, including Austria.

I said that I agreed to this. I thought, however, it would be better that, instead of amending the Servian Note as M. Pichon contemplated, M. Iswolsky's own suggestion, as described in Sir A. Nicolson's Telegram No. 121 of the 5th inst[ant],⁽²⁾ should be adopted. Servia would then draw up a new Note, containing three simple unqualified statements:—

1. That she wished to be on good neighbourly relations with Austria;
2. That she did not ask for any compensations, territorial, economic, or political;
3. That she left her case in the hands of the Powers.

M. Cambon at once expressed his own opinion that this would be the best course.

In the second place, M. Pichon agreed that there was now no need for a collective representation at Belgrade, and I said that this naturally followed.

After the communication of the Servian Note, M. Pichon thought there should be a representation, collective or individual, at Vienna, asking for the assembling of the Conference as soon as the Turco-Bulgarian question was settled.

I said that I thought the representation should be individual, and not collective. There should be added at the end of it: "as soon as a preliminary accord has been come to on point 7 of the Programme,⁽³⁾ in accordance with the Austrian declaration of last November." I thought that unless this was put in, Austria would be sure to take the point.

M. Cambon further made to me privately the accompanying communication (No. II) respecting the discussion between M. de Kiderlen and the French Amb[assado]r at Berlin.

I said that I agreed with M. Pichon's opinion. But I observed that I understood the Treaty of Commerce between Austria and Servia expired on the 31st of this month; there was not, therefore, much time left for dealing with it if its discussion was to be postponed till after the Conference had met and the international questions had been settled.

M. Cambon said that it was not a Treaty of Commerce, but only an arrangement which could easily be prolonged.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 658.

(1.)

*Avis de Monsieur Pichon qu'il se réserve d'exprimer après entente avec
Londres et Pétersbourg.*

5 mars, 1909.

On peut admettre le principe d'une distinction entre les divers avantages économiques à accorder par l'Autriche à la Serbie, les uns devant être soumis aux Puissances, d'autres (particulièrement un traité de commerce) ne pouvant réellement être discutés que par les intéressés. Mais il est impossible d'admettre, comme le

⁽¹⁾ [Also to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 96, *cp. Siebert* (1921), p. 245.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 660, No. 654.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 539, No. 491.]

suggère M. de Kiderlen, à la demande de l'Autriche, que les questions à traiter directement entre Vienne et Belgrade aient le pas sur celles qui devront être soumises aux Puissances.

M. Pichon n'accepte donc pas la suggestion qu'en représentant que la Serbie s'abouche avec M. d'Aehrenthal aussitôt après que la note Serbe aura été communiquée à Vienne.

Il pense, comme l'Ambassadeur de France à Berlin, que l'acceptation par les Puissances des principaux points de la suggestion Allemande doit avoir pour corollaire l'acceptation par l'Autriche du principe de la Conférence.

(2.)

(Privé.)

4 mars, 1909.

L'Ambassadeur de France à Berlin a dit à M. de Kiderlen que Monsieur Pichon trouvait désormais inutile la remise à Belgrade d'une note commune.

M. de Kiderlen a communiqué à l'Ambassadeur de France un télégramme du Ministre Allemand à Belgrade disant que M. Novakovitch avait annoncé à ce ministre la démarche de M. Iswolski appuyée par la France, l'Angleterre et l'Italie, et la décision du Gouvernement Serbe de répondre qu'il se soumettrait à la volonté des Puissances et ne réclamerait aucune compensation. La Serbie cessera tout armement lorsque l'Autriche mettra fin à ses préparatifs militaires. La question de l'autonomie étant réglée par l'arrangement Austro-Turc, la Serbie n'en parle plus.

Après la communication de ce télégramme, M. de Kiderlen suggère :

Que les Puissances demandent à M. Novakovitch une note écrite reproduisant ses déclarations verbales—

Que cette note soit d'un commun accord communiquée à Vienne par les Puissances—

Qu'après cette communication la Serbie s'abouche avec le Baron d'Aehrenthal pour discuter les avantages que l'Autriche est prête à faire à la Serbie.

Cette négociation devrait avoir lieu le plus tôt possible vu la réunion prochaine du Reichsrath.

M. de Kiderlen fait la distinction que nous connaissons déjà entre les avantages économiques ayant un caractère international et ceux dépendant de la souveraineté de l'Autriche.

Il ajoute que, d'après certaines indications, on pourrait demander à Vienne que la réponse de la Serbie fût communiquée par la Serbie elle-même à l'Autriche, mais qu'il se portait fort de faire écarter cette prétention.

A ces différentes suggestions et observations de M. de Kiderlen M. Jules Cambon répond qu'il les transmettra à M. Pichon. Il fait remarquer que la distinction faite entre les questions à régler directement entre l'Autriche et la Serbie et celles à régler internationalement implique la nécessité d'une Conférence et en admet le principe.

No. 659.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 9385/26/09/44.

(No. 40.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 8, 1909.

The Austrian Ambassador came to inform me to-day that Baron Aehrenthal

effect: Owing to the attitude of Servia, it had of course been impossible to proceed with the ratification of the Treaty of Commerce, the provisional arrangement for which expired on March 31st; but, if Servia would change her attitude with regard to Austria on the subject of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and assume one of good neighbourliness, Austria would be glad to enter into negotiations with her direct with a view to a Treaty of Commerce and Traffic. Count Forgach had been instructed to make this communication in the most friendly spirit; Baron Aehrenthal did not wish it to have the form of putting pressure upon Servia, but if nothing was done before March 31st, a tariff war would begin which would be very inconvenient to Servia.⁽¹⁾

I told Count Mensdorff that I did not yet know what would be the final form of the Servian reply to the Russian advice.

He asked me what that form was likely to be. Would the reply be addressed to Russia only?

I said that the present idea was that the reply should be addressed to all the Powers, including Austria. The point immediately under consideration was how the reply could be put into this form in a manner which would be satisfactory.

Count Mensdorff then said that Baron Aehrenthal agreed that an "accord préalable" was indispensable before a Conference met. Baron Aehrenthal hoped such an agreement would soon be reached; and I gathered that he also hoped that when it had been reached, it might be possible to dispense with the Conference, and to ratify what had been done by an exchange of Notes. Otherwise, a long time might be taken up by the Conference, especially if it embarked upon a discussion of such questions as the Capitulations, Post Offices in Turkey, and so forth.

I said that if the Servian reply was satisfactory, we should be in a position to take stock of our "accord préalable," and to see how far we had got. With regard to the difficulty between Austria and Turkey, we had already reached an "accord préalable" which would insure that if this difficulty was discussed at a Conference there would be no risk of our being unable to come to an agreement. I hoped a similar stage might be reached in a few days with regard to the difficulty between Turkey and Bulgaria. But the Servian question would have to be nearer settlement before we could decide upon our future procedure.

[I am. &c.]

E. G[REY].

(1) [For the full text of Count Forgach's communication, *v. infra*, p. 697, No. 706 (a).]

No. 660.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽²⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, March 9, 1909.

. . . . I know perfectly well, as it has been mentioned to me from one or two quarters, that there is an impression that Iswolsky is guided by me, and that I encourage him in an anti-German and anti-Austrian line of policy. This is absolutely untrue. I have spoken freely to Iswolsky as to the difficulties which d'Aehrenthal has created, but I have never gone further than what was quite justifiable, or indeed beyond what has been said in London to Metternich and Mensdorff. I have never urged him to adopt a line which might widen the breach between him and Vienna. As to my "running him," the idea is ridiculous. We now know each other very intimately, and without vanity, I may say that he has confidence in me, and doubtless likes to talk over matters with me. I am pleased that he should do so, and I think that it is of advantage that he should do so. But he forms his own judgments and takes his own decisions.

The fact is that there is soreness in German and Austrian circles that Iswolsky leans more towards us than to them. But this is owing to no personal efforts of

(2) [Grey MSS. (Russia), Vol. 34.]

my own, but simply to the force of circumstances and to the logic of events, with which I have nothing to do, and over which I exercise no influence.

I hope that you will forgive me for making these few remarks, in which I fear that the personal element has entered largely, but I wished to explain how matters stood here. . . .⁽²⁾

Y[ou]rs sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽²⁾ [The omitted passages of this letter describe the attitude of the British embassy to the political situation.]

No. 661.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 9454/26/09/44.

(No. 94.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 9, 1909.

M. Poklevski told me to-day that M. Iswolsky had advised the Servian Government to draw up a short circular to the Powers, containing simply the three points which he had himself suggested, which I had thought good ones, of good neighbourliness with Austria, the dropping on their own part of all claims, territorial, political, or economic, and the leaving of their case in the hands of the Powers. M. Iswolsky had advised them to add to this that they were prepared to negotiate direct with Austria with regard to purely commercial matters; he had also recommended to them the acceptance of the Austrian initiative about a Commercial Treaty.⁽¹⁾

M. Poklevski asked me whether I had heard from Belgrade what the Servians were doing about this.

I said that I had no news.

M. Poklevski went on to say that he thought it had been M. Pichon's suggestion and mine that the questions between Austria and Servia should be divided, some being appropriate for direct negotiations, and others being more suitable for negotiations by the Powers.

I replied that it was Count Mensdorff who had first told me that Austria could not allow the Powers to discuss a Commercial Treaty between her and Servia and the junction of railways, as these were matters within her own sovereign right; but that Austria would discuss with the Powers the Danube-Adriatic Railway and the Danube Commission. I had made no comment on this communication, except to refer generally to the standpoint taken by Austria in her Note of November⁽²⁾ last in favour of discussion with the Powers. After that, I had heard that M. Iswolsky, in conversation with you, had said a Commercial Treaty would have to be left for direct negotiations between Servia and Austria. M. Cambon had told me subsequently that M. Pichon held this opinion, but considered that before direct negotiations were urged at Belgrade Austria should accept the principle of dealing at a Conference with the other questions.

M. Poklevski said that he heard we were opposed to the Danube-Adriatic Railway and the representation of Servia on the Danube Commission. He thought, however, that there might be a Commission for the Upper Danube, which was at present entirely under Austrian control, to which Servia and Bulgaria might be admitted. This would be a direct concession from Austria.

I told him I had supported the Danube-Adriatic Railway. As a matter of fact, I had instructed you to support the project in conversation with Rifaat Pasha at St. Petersburg, as well as the settlement of the Turco-Persian frontier; but I had heard that M. Iswolsky, finding that Rifaat Pasha could not deal with these matters without reference to Constantinople, had not pressed them. We should certainly support the Danube-Adriatic Railway project. With regard to the River, though I knew our trade would not like an enlargement of the Commission for the Lower

⁽¹⁾ [Siebert (1921), pp. 245-8.]

Danube, so that we should be outvoted and regulations passed to the disadvantage of our trade and shipping, I was not aware that we had any reason for objecting to a Commission such as M. Poklevski had indicated for the Upper Danube.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 662.

M. Gruic to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9565/26/09/44.

(No. 49.)

Légation Royale de Serbie, Londres, le 10 mars, 1909.⁽¹⁾

Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat,

D'ordre de mon Gouvernement, j'ai l'honneur de porter à la connaissance de Votre Excellence la déclaration ci-après :⁽²⁾

“La Serbie, considérant qu'au point de vue du droit sa situation à l'égard del' Autriche-Hongrie, après la proclamation del'annexion dela de la [sic] Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine, est restée normale, n'a aucune intention de provoquer la guerre contre la monarchie voisine et ne désire modifier en rien envers elle ses rapports juridiques, continuant à remplir, sur la base de la réciprocité, ses devoirs de bon voisinage et à entretenir avec elle, comme par le passé, les relations rentrant dans le domaine des intérêts d'ordre matériel. S'étant toujours soumise au point de vue que la question Bosno-Herzégovinienne est une question européenne et qu'il appartient aux puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin à décider relativement à l'annexion et à la nouvelle rédaction de l'Art[icle] 25 du Traité de Berlin, la Serbie, confiante en la sagesse et l'équité des puissances, leur remet, sans réserve, comme au tribunal compétent, sa cause, sans réclamer, par conséquent, de l'Autriche-Hongrie, de ce chef, aucune compensation, soit territoriale, soit politique ou économique.”

En vous communiquant cette déclaration, j'ai, &c.

S. Y. GROUITCH.

⁽¹⁾ [The paper is stamped as being received on March 12; but it is clear from a telegram sent to Mr. Whitehead on March 11 that Sir E. Grey had received it earlier.]

⁽²⁾ [v. Telegram *en clair* from Prince Ratibor, at Belgrade, and the Emperor William's comments, G.P. XXVI, II, p. 660.]

No. 663.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9771/26/09/44A.

(No. 155.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 10, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 15, 1909.

As I knew that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador had made some communication yesterday to M. Iswolsky, I asked the latter this morning whether matters were proceeding smoothly in regard to the difficulties between Austria and Servia. His Excellency replied that he could not say that the prospects were brilliant. Count Berchtold had commenced to read to him a telegram which he had received from his Government but it was so confused owing to some errors in transmission that it was not very intelligible. Later in the day Count Berchtold had called upon M. Tcharykoff and the latter had gathered from His Excellency that the telegram had been redecyphered, and that the Austro-Hungarian Government required that Servia, in order to show her good faith, should recognize and accept the protocol which has been recently signed between Austria-Hungary and Turkey. M. Iswolsky said that in the

first place, he did not see the *locus standi* of Serbia in regard to the protocol, which had not yet been accepted by the Powers, as she was not a signatory of the Berlin Treaty; and secondly he doubted extremely if any Serbian Government would subscribe to the demand of the Vienna Cabinet, if it were made. It was, His Excellency continued, difficult to believe that the Austrian Government were acting in good faith, as they were always raising some new demand, while their press continued to be minatory towards Serbia and were cordially supported in that respect by all the German journals who had any connection with the German Government.

M. Iswolsky considered that it was of the highest importance that the Servian Government should lose no time in issuing their Circular, and it would be of advantage if its terms were then made public, so as to show the world the conciliatory and pacific attitude which Serbia had adopted. Such moral pressure would then in all probability be brought to bear on Baron d'Aehrenthal as to induce him to moderate his demands on Serbia. The Russian Government had gone, in fact, further than any other Power in their advice to Serbia, and had employed all their influence in their desire to maintain peace. It was most unfortunate that Austria did not show a similar conciliatory and pacific spirit.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 664.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, March 10, 1909.

. . . .⁽²⁾ As to the likelihood of Russia remaining quiet in the event of a conflict between Austria and Serbia and Montenegro, I have noticed of late a growing opinion that Russia cannot go to war—not so much on account of her military unpreparedness, for this is not admitted, but because it would upset the finances, and above all because it might give the revolutionaries the chance for which they are looking. The latter feel that their cause is rapidly losing ground, and they hope that amid the turmoil of a war, and with a Gov[ernmen]t preoccupied outside they would be able to create difficulties in the interior, and bring back all the old troubles. It is this last consideration which is causing many people to reflect, and to moderate the high tone which was adopted not so long ago. I still, however, maintain my opinion that it would be rash to count upon Russia remaining passive. A sudden wave of public feeling might sweep away all prudential considerations.

I am sorry that the negotiations between Rifaat Pasha and the Russian Gov[ernmen]t are not progressing very favourably.⁽²⁾

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Russia), Vol. 34.]

⁽²⁾ [The omitted parts of this letter contain a general discussion of Austro-Servian relations and of the negotiations between Turkey and Russia.]

No. 665.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, March 11, 1909.

F.O. 9472/26/09/44A.

D. 7.48 P.M.

Tel. (No. 23.)

R. 7.55 P.M.

Italian Ambassador has just communicated to me and my French colleague a telegram received from Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, giving substance of a conversation between Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs and Italian Ambassador

at Vienna. Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in speaking of Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs' advice to Serbia, had said that Powers should base their action on the Austro-Turkish Agreement, recognizing the annexation of the two provinces as definitive, and leaving to Austria-Hungary the task of settling other pending questions. He had added that England and France seemed taken up with the idea of consolidating Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs' position, but that if they did not accept point of view which he had just indicated, and which was a *sine quâ non*, solution of present difficulties would be greatly retarded and rendered more grave.

In another telegram Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs said that Montenegrin Government had addressed a communication to Russian Government stating that they would accept no solution which did not respect rights of Servian nation.

No. 666.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 11, 1909.

F.O. 9471/26/09/44A.

D. 8.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 134.)

R. 9.20 P.M.

Austrian Embassy here has communicated to Minister for Foreign Affairs two telegrams from Baron d'Aehrenthal, the substance of one of which is that Serbia is desirous that the Powers should at once examine Austro-Turkish Protocol, and if they agree to it that she will be ready to enter into direct communication with Austria-Hungary. Austro-Hungarian Government express hope that Russia will explain at Belgrade that the annexation is practically settled "in merito," and express hope that Serbia will renounce all further interest in the two provinces.

I am not sure as to the exact words, as I am repeating from memory, and M. Isvolsky intends to communicate telegrams to you. He says he never heard Serbia was desirous that the Protocol should be examined immediately, and he does not believe it. Moreover, he thinks that it is asking too much to request that Russia should take above steps. The other telegram gives formula of a declaration which Serbia should make to Austria-Hungary, which so far as I remember also amounts to recognition of annexation of provinces.

These telegrams confirm M. Isvolsky in the conviction that Austria is determined to force Serbia into making complete submission, and to abstain from invoking the good offices of the other Powers. He will tell Austrian Ambassador that as Serbia has issued a Circular⁽¹⁾ to all the Powers he can give no reply to the two telegrams until the Circular has been examined by all the Powers. He thinks that allusion to Article 25 in the Circular was a mistake, but that on the whole Circular should satisfy Austro-Hungarian Government if they wish to be satisfied, which he doubts extremely.

He is telegraphing to Russian Embassy in London his reply on the Austro-Turkish Protocol, which will be much the same as (? what) you propose; and he omits all reference to Article 25, and states Russia is ready to go to a Conference.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 666, No. 662.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. Siebert* (1921), pp. 248-9.]

No. 667.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 12, 1909.

F.O. 9600/26/09/44A.

D. 6.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 67.)

R. 8 P.M.

I inquired of Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon what he thought of Servian Circular to the Powers, which he said had been communicated to him yesterday by the Servian Minister in the most friendly terms.

His Excellency replied that it was a step in the right direction, though it seemed to him to lack precision. He objects to passage in which Serbia confides her cause to the Powers without defining it. This, according to him, would open the door to much misunderstanding. However, the Servian Circular interested Austria to a minor degree, and he had no intention of replying to it. The important point for Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs was the answer which Serbia would give to the representation made last week by Austro-Hungarian Government at Belgrade. He understood that Servian Government would reply to it shortly, and he hoped that it would be fairly acceptable. That, he said, would depend largely on the advice given by the Powers at Belgrade.

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs then read to me a telegram just received from Austrian Ambassador at St. Petersburg, reporting conversation with Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, in which latter declared that he recognized that all concessions which legitimately belong to domain of Commercial Treaties must be negotiated for directly between Belgrade and Vienna. Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs added Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs could not do better for the peace of the world than to speak in this sense at Belgrade.

I reminded his Excellency that Austria had in November last⁽¹⁾ consented to allow question of economic advantages for Serbia to stand on programme of Conference, and asked him what interpretation he placed on these words. He then said it would perhaps have been better had the qualification "international" preceded the words "economic advantages," for it would then have been quite clear what Austria meant, namely, to allow discussion at the Conference of such questions as Danube-Adriatic Railway, admission of Serbia to Danube Commission, guarantee of integrity of Servian territory, &c.

Tariff concessions and railway advantages in Bosnia could only be guaranteed after direct negotiations between Belgrade and Vienna. He begged me to impress this point upon you, and to say that until this was openly recognized by the Powers the Servian question would be kept open in an acute form. He concluded by saying that Servian situation must be cleared up by 1st April, otherwise a Tariff war would aggravate matters, and it was impossible to foresee what might ensue.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 539, No. 491.]

No. 668.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, March 12, 1909.

F.O. 9597/26/09/44A.

D. 7.3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 24.)

R. 8.15 P.M.

Servian note was handed to Minister for Foreign Affairs yesterday. First impression was not favourable. But now, after receipt of news from Vienna, while it is still regarded as a designedly ambiguous document, it is considered by Minister for Foreign Affairs as perhaps showing certain signs of a better spirit on the part of Servian Government, and, in fact, as the beginning of a retreat from their

impossible position. Minister for Foreign Affairs states its true meaning can only be seen when the Servian Government returns its answer to Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs's recent communication. The points most blamed are allusion to Tribunal and the omission of any mention of disarmament.

No. 669.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 12, 1909.

F.O. 9598/26/09/44A.

D. 7.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 136.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

M. Isvolsky informed French Ambassador this afternoon that Russia could not possibly advise Serbia, as suggested by Austria, to recognize a Protocol⁽¹⁾ which Russia herself had not yet recognized or accepted. He said that Russia could now do no more, and I understand that he hopes that France and England will take some steps at Vienna.

I may mention that Austrian Ambassador, who has hitherto been impressing on newspaper correspondents with whom he is in frequent relations that a pacific solution would be found, has sent for a French correspondent and authorized him to telegraph that, owing to attitude of Serbia and unsatisfactory nature of her Circular, it would be necessary to send her very shortly an ultimatum.

⁽¹⁾ [The Austro-Turkish Protocol signed February 26, 1909, for text *v. supra*, pp. 638-40, No. 622, *encl. cp.* also pp. 666-7, No. 663.]

No. 670.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 12, 1909.

F.O. 9599/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 69.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Austro-Turkish Protocol.

Baron von Aehrenthal said to me to-day that he had not yet received your reply with regard to it. He was evidently somewhat anxious to ascertain what form it would assume. He reminded me of the satisfaction expressed by you on 11th January⁽¹⁾ on learning that Austro-Hungarian Government had decided to settle dispute with Turkey on financial basis, and assumed therefore that final signing of Protocol must have given you even more pleasure.

He informed me that French Minister for Foreign Affairs had sent congratulations, and as for those he had received from Prince Bülow, it was hardly necessary to say how warm they were.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 565, No. 516. This describes an interview between Count Mensdorff and Sir C. Hardinge of the 11th.]

No. 671.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 10108/26/09/44.

(No. 99.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 12, 1909.

M. Poklevski gave me to-day the accompanying note as to the views of M. Iswolsky with regard to the reply of the Russian Government to the Austrian communication of the Austro-Turkish Protocol.

I told him that I would reply in the same sense.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 671.

Note communicated by M. Poklevski to Sir Edward Grey.

Le texte de l'arrangement Austro-Turc a été remis à Mr. Iswolsky par l'Ambassadeur d'Autriche-Hongrie, en même temps que la copie d'une note du Baron d'Aehrenthal qui accompagnait ce document.

Le Gouvernement Impérial se propose d'accuser réception de ces pièces et de rappeler à cette occasion que l'arrangement direct ci-dessus n'exclut pas la nécessité de soumettre à une Conférence des Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin la question de l'annexion de la Bosnie-Herzégovine. Le Gouvernement Impérial se déclarerait par conséquent prêt dès à présent à s'entendre avec l'Autriche-Hongrie et avec les autres Puissances signataires au sujet de la réunion d'une Conférence qui aurait à s'occuper, tant de la Bosnie-Herzégovine, que des autres points du programme que tous les Cabinets avaient accepté précédemment.

Le Cabinet de St. Pétersbourg serait désireux de savoir si le Gouvernement Britannique serait disposé à répondre dans le même sens au Cabinet de Vienne.

No. 672.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 10139/26/09/44.

(No. 100.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 12, 1909.

M. Poklevski made to me to-day the accompanying communication with regard to the Austrian attitude towards Servia.

I told him that, if Count Mensdorff informed me that this was the view of the Austrian Government, I should reply that all Servia ought to be asked to say was that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was a European question. I would add that this, in my opinion, should satisfy Austria; and that, if it did not satisfy Austria, I did not know what would.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

Enclosure in No. 672.

Note communicated by M. Poklevski to Sir Edward Grey.

Malgré quelques détails de rédaction, introduits contrairement aux conseils venus de St-Pétersbourg, dans la circulaire Serbe remise hier à M. Iswolsky par le Ministre de Serbie, le Gouvernement Impérial considère ce document comme satisfaisant et dont tout juge impartial se contenterait.

Il y a cependant des raisons de croire que telle ne serait pas malheureusement l'opinion du Cabinet de Vienne.

Celui-ci, d'après les paroles mêmes du Comte Berchtold, insistera sur une nouvelle déclaration faisant mention du protocole Austro-Turc et dans laquelle le fait de l'annexion serait explicitement reconnu comme une affaire résolue en la matière et sur laquelle aucune discussion ne saurait plus porter.

Il est douteux qu'il se trouve un Cabinet Serbe pour adhérer à pareille exigence laquelle laisserait ainsi peu d'espoir d'une solution amiable.

Ayant de son côté usé de tous les moyens en son pouvoir pour modérer la Serbie, le Gouvernement Impérial considère actuellement urgent que les Cabinets de Londres, de Paris et de Rome tâchent d'amener le Baron d'Aehrenthal à plus de conciliation dans son attitude et qu'ils usent à cet effet de toute leur influence à Vienne et à Berlin.

No. 673.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9788/26/09/44A.

(No. 87.) Very Confidential.

Sir,

Berlin, D. March 12, 1909.

R. March 15, 1909.

I have the honour to report that the Servian Note⁽¹⁾ was handed to the German Minister of Foreign Affairs yesterday morning. It has not made a favourable impression. It is considered to be drawn up in such a manner as to leave the situation just as confused and just as far from a settlement as before it was written. It is described as just a juggle with words, which might even be amusing if it were not part of a game in which the lives of men are at stake. It is thought that, while it does not completely bar the way to a peaceful settlement, parts of it are so evidently designed to annoy the Austro-Hungarian Government that it is more likely than not to render Baron d'Aehrenthal more indisposed than ever to accept the idea of a Conference.⁽²⁾

I met Herr von Schoen yesterday evening at a dinner given at the Austro-Hungarian Embassy, and had some conversation with both him and the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador. They neither of them seemed to think that the Note would help matters on at all, rather the contrary; and they were both of the opinion that the allusion to a "Tribunal" before which Austria-Hungary was practically summoned to appear was most unfortunate and likely to irritate both Baron d'Aehrenthal and Austrian public opinion. I said that I could not agree that it was a case of Austria-Hungary being summoned before a Tribunal, the point being rather that Serbia, feeling herself too weak to plead her own cause, placed it in the hands of all the Powers with a promise to abide by their decision. They said that in any case the word "Tribunal" was unfortunate, and that the omission of any mention of disarmament was more unfortunate still. I said that it was perhaps just as well that that subject had been omitted, as it would have been somewhat difficult for the Servian Government to mention it without drawing attention at the same time to the great military preparations in Austria-Hungary, and perhaps demanding simultaneous disarmament. That would probably have caused more comment and perhaps annoyance that the omission to mention the subject. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador admitted that this would probably have been the case, but added that the Austro-Hungarian military preparations had been greatly exaggerated. Leaving this subject, M. de Schoen said that of course by a Tribunal a Conference was meant, and he saw no possibility of one being held before all the questions with Serbia were settled; and even then a Conference seemed to him somewhat unnecessary, as it would be merely a means for registering accomplished facts. This could be just as easily arranged by the less cumbersome means of exchanges of Notes. The conversation hovered around this point for some

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 666, No. 662.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. G.P. XXVI, II, pp. 650-3.*]

time, but it was a case of arguing in a circle, as we always came back to the starting-point which was that it was no good speaking of a Conference at present as the Austro-Hungarian Government had given it so plainly to be understood that her affairs with Serbia were not matters for a Conference to decide. I used the arguments on this subject which you used in conversation with Count Metternich, but M. de Schoen again informed me that Baron d'Aehrenthal took a different view of his engagement with regard to the Conference Programme, and said that he had meant that the discussion of the "advantages to be obtained for Serbia" should be confined to the interested Powers and that these were Austria-Hungary and Serbia.

On the afternoon of the same day the Italian Ambassador saw M. Kiderlen. He found him raging over the Servian note: in fact so angry that he apparently said many foolish things. He observed, among other things, that Great Britain, France, and Italy would be responsible if war occurred, which seemed only too likely in view of the equivocal and irritating language of the Servian Note. On M. Pansa demurring, M. Kiderlen maintained that his assertion was true because the above Powers, if they had done their duty, would have discouraged, instead of encouraging, M. Iswolsky in his acts of bad faith. M. Pansa asked him to what acts of bad faith he alluded, and M. Kiderlen replied that M. Iswolsky had first pretended to acquiesce in the proposed representations of the Powers at Belgrade and had then, with scarcely any warning, taken the wind out of every one's sails and acted alone. This action had not only been perfidious but had also been foolish, as there was no doubt that the negotiations between Russia and Serbia and the fact that the Servian Note had been edited by M. Iswolsky had added to the irritation of Baron d'Aehrenthal. M. Pansa said that he saw that it was no good arguing with M. Kiderlen in his then state of mind, and so had left him very soon. Of course the chief reason for M. Kiderlen's irritation was the failure of his own plan to meet with M. Iswolsky's approbation.

To-day M. Cambon saw M. Kiderlen and found him in a very different frame of mind. He talked quite calmly of the Servian Note, said that it was of course drawn up in ambiguous language, but that after all it was possible that it might open the way to a settlement; at all events it did not absolutely shut the door against further negotiations. There was nothing more to be said for the present, as everything depended upon the answer which Serbia would give to Baron d'Aehrenthal's last communication to the Servian Government. If, in that answer, they expressed their readiness to enter into negotiations for a treaty of commerce, all might yet be well; as in those negotiations "many questions" might be discussed; if those questions were satisfactorily settled a ratifying Conference, which many of the Powers still seemed to desire, might after all be held. Should, however, Serbia refuse the invitation to negotiate, then there could only be one end to the business!

It is important to note that this is the first time that M. Kiderlen has ever admitted the idea of a Conference either to M. Cambon; to me or, as far as I am aware, to any one else.

The "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung" has, however, a small communiqué, inserted, I believe, by M. Kiderlen himself. It runs as follows:—

"The Servian Note has given rise to many different impressions. By some it is regarded as a step towards more peaceful sentiments: by others as the reverse, and by no one as completely satisfactory. One must wait and see whether, and what, Serbia answers to the Austro-Hungarian communication. In Vienna and here there is a very strong current of opinion that the Servian demand that 'all her claims' should be considered and decided upon by a European Conference, should exercise no influence upon the action of the Powers. For all the Powers have been unanimous upon one point, namely that a Conference, if held, should have a sharply defined Programme, and only deal with questions on which the partakers in the Conference have come to an under-

That all the organs of public opinion in Germany do not share the official view of the Servian Note is clearly shown from an extract from a leading article in the "Frankfurter Zeitung", which has just been brought to my notice.

After contesting the claim of Austria-Hungary that direct negotiations between Vienna and Belgrade are the only means for arriving at a peaceful settlement, the Article uses the following words:—"The right of Serbia to place its case in the hands of the Powers is incontestable, seeing that the Bosnian question, the origin of the whole crisis, is still before the Forum of the Great Powers for their decision. Whether this decision is to be taken at a Conference or by means of an exchange of Notes, is immaterial; once it is realized in Vienna that the Austro-Servian question also can and must be settled by the mediation of the Powers, a peaceful solution will not be a matter of too great difficulty. A further persistence on the part of Austria-Hungary in her demand for direct negotiations may entail consequences of which she will have to bear the burden alone."

On the other hand, the official view of the Servian Note is strongly upheld in an article published in the "Vossische Zeitung," of which a précis, by Mr. Seymour, is enclosed herewith.⁽³⁾

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

⁽³⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 674.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 10010/26/09/44.

(No. 42.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 12, 1909.

Count Mensdorff told me to-day that he had no formal communication to make, but he had heard from Baron Aehrenthal the reply which the latter had made to the Servian Minister on receiving the Servian circular.⁽²⁾

Baron Aehrenthal had remarked that the Servian circular was not a reply to the Austrian representation at Belgrade; that certain passages in it seemed to answer to the just demands of Austria; but that he could not say as much of the note as a whole. It was, however, one step nearer to entering upon a better path, and he hoped that the reply to be given to the communication of Count Forgach at Belgrade would mark still more the good disposition put forward by the Servian Government.

This was what Baron Aehrenthal had said to the Servian Minister, but to Count Mensdorff he had made some criticisms upon the note. The first part of it, stating that the juridical position of Serbia with regard to Austria remained unaffected, was correct enough. But the second part, in which Serbia placed her cause in the hands of the Powers as a competent tribunal, did not agree with the position stated in the first part.

Baron Aehrenthal regarded the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina as practically settled by the Austro-Turkish protocol. The material side of the question, by which he meant the substance of it, could not be discussed any more. The formal side was a matter for the Signatory Powers only, and not for Serbia. Baron Aehrenthal feared the wording of the second part of the Servian circular was intended to leave open the question of annexation, and to avoid giving up definitely the Servian attitude of making claims.

⁽¹⁾ [Also to Sir A. Nicolson (No. 98). An account of it is given in *Siebert* (1921), p. 249. The telegram No. 109 to Sir F. Cartwright describing this interview is much shorter and was not sent till the 13th March.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 666, No. 662.]

Baron Aehrenthal especially took exception to the statement that Servia would "continue" her attitude of good neighbourliness. As a matter of fact, in order to secure such an attitude, change, and not continuance, was necessary.

I told Count Mensdorff that the construction I had put on the Servian note was that Servia regarded the "status" of Bosnia and Herzegovina as depending upon the Treaty of Berlin, and that any alteration of that Treaty was a matter for consideration by the Berlin Treaty Powers, and not by Servia. She therefore did not concern herself with it, and had to abide by whatever decision they came to; but she hoped that when the Treaty Powers were making alterations in the Treaty of Berlin, they would consider Servian interests favourably. If that was a true construction of the Servian note, the note ought to be satisfactory to Austria.

I told Count Mensdorff that there has been some apprehension that Austria was going to insist that Servia should recognise the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a consequence of the Constantinople protocol. I did not think it would be fair to ask Servia to do this, and if she was asked I thought her reply should be that, as she was not a party to the Treaty of Berlin, it was not for her to recognise alterations in it, except when they were made by all the Treaty Powers. If Servia said that, and expressed her readiness to abide by the decision of the Powers, I thought Austria ought to be satisfied on that point.

As regards the point between Austria and the Powers, I was not clear as to the distinction between the material side and the formal side. Austria surely could not say that it was in the power of herself and Turkey to alter the Treaty of Berlin without the consent of the other Powers.

Count Mensdorff said the Powers would be asked to recognise the formal side of the annexation.

I replied that in that case they must have the right of discussing the terms on which they would recognise it.

I had thought that the Servian reply would remove the difficulty as to territorial and political claims being put forward at the Conference. The Austro-Turkish protocol had removed all chance of the Conference being confronted by a protest from Turkey against annexation. The Bulgarian question was also nearly settled. I had, therefore, hoped the time had come when we might say that there was sufficient preliminary accord on important points to enable the Conference to meet. I gathered, however, that Baron Aehrenthal was not yet satisfied as to the Servian question. Was I correct in assuming that he was waiting for the Servian reply to Count Forgach's communication at Belgrade?⁽³⁾

Count Mensdorff said he thought this was so, and that the nature of that reply would have considerable influence on the definite opinion of Baron Aehrenthal.

I remarked that if the reply contained an assurance of good neighbourliness and of readiness to enter into direct negotiations for a Commercial Treaty with Austria, surely we might discuss whether things were sufficiently advanced to enable a Conference to meet.

Count Mensdorff again observed that Servia should not use the expression "continue" as describing her attitude.

I told him that, as Servia had abandoned her large claims, Austria really ought not to expect an apology as well as an abandonment.

Count Mensdorff said he did not suppose that an apology was demanded.

I said that all that was required, then, was a reply from the Servian Government not containing the word "continue" or an apology.

Count Mensdorff told me that he thought it ought to be possible for the Servian Government, by means of informal consultations with Count Forgach and perhaps other Foreign Ministers at Belgrade, to find some suitable formula.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

⁽³⁾ [*r. supra*, pp. 663-4, No. 659, and *infra*, pp. 697-8, No. 706.]

No. 675.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, March 13, 1909.*

F.O. 9745/26/09/44A.

D. 4 P.M.

Tel. (No. 137.)

R. 8 P.M.

M. Isvolsky is telegraphing to Belgrade to express his regret at insertion in Servian Circular of one or two phrases which might have been omitted, and recommending Servian Government to delay no longer in informing Austrian Government that they are ready to enter into negotiations as to a Commercial Treaty. M. Isvolsky does not believe this step on the part of Serbia will have any practical results, but he thinks it desirable that Serbia should show every desire to act correctly. He is sure Austria will demand from Serbia as preliminary condition that she should recognize and accept Austro-Turkish Protocol, which, of course, no Servian Government can or will be able to do. M. Isvolsky is of opinion that view of Austria that Powers should consider Protocol as practically settling the annexation question is quite untenable and unacceptable.

He tells me his information is to the effect that an ultimatum will very soon be presented to Serbia accompanied by mobilization, and that four army corps will be mobilized on the Russian frontier and four on the Italian frontier. I asked what in the circumstances Russia would do. He gave me no definite reply, but said that feeling here would be very strong, and that Opposition press was doing all that was possible to excite public opinion to war.

He read me telegrams which he had received from Russian Embassy in London, saying that His Majesty's Government could adapt their reply to that of the Russian Government, and that if Austrian Ambassador in London held same language as Austrian Ambassador here you would reply in sense of views of Russian Government. This pleased him.

He is of opinion that Austrian policy is a most short-sighted one, and even if Austria gains paltry military success over Serbia she would derive no real advantage, and would alienate for ever Russia from her.

No. 676.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 9599/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 13, 1909.

Tel. (No. 110.)

D. 4.50 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 69.⁽¹⁾

I expressed to C[oun]t Mensdorff my satisfaction at the agreement which had been arrived at when H[is] E[xc]cellency communicated it to me⁽²⁾ and you may assure Baron Aehrenthal of my sincere congratulation at its conclusion which will facilitate a final settlement by the Powers.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 670, No. 670.]

⁽²⁾ [For text v. *supra*, pp. 638-40, No. 622, *encl.*]

No. 677.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, March 13, 1909.*

F.O. 9746/26/09/44A.

D. 5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 139.) Most Confidential.

R. 8 P.M.

Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs showed me this afternoon an Additional Article which M. Isvolsky wished him to sign and append to Protocol, which will be drawn up when indemnity negotiations are concluded. It was to the effect that now that the compensation question had been settled Turkey declared she expressly recognized the new political order of things in Bulgaria.

I told Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs that M. Isvolsky had not said a word to me on the subject, which was strange; that, if they signed Article, Russian Government would be committing the same fault as that with which we were reproaching Austrian Government; that there was no analogy whatever between proposed Article and Protocol recently signed between Austria and Turkey; that Russia would weaken enormously the position which she was assuming as regards annexation, and would place both England and France in a very embarrassing situation, and that I hoped that he would decline to sign it, and say he must consult his Government and His Majesty's Government.

He agreed with all the above, and said that he would suggest to M. Isvolsky that the latter should speak to me.

No. 678.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, March 13, 1909.*

F.O. 9747/26/09/44A.

D. 6.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 140.) Urgent.

R. 8 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

I told Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs that perhaps if he added to the Additional Article "when the other Powers had given their consent" there might be no harm in signing, but that, in any case, he had better first consult his colleagues and His Majesty's Government.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [i.e. immediately preceding document.]

⁽²⁾ [In telegram No. 308 of March 15, Sir Edward Grey "entirely" approved the language used in this and the preceding telegram. Both telegrams were sent to Sir G. Lowther on March 15, *v. infra*, p. 682, No. 687, *min.*]

No. 679.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 9750/26/09/44A.

Rome, D. March 13, 1909, 7.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 39.)

R. March 14, 1909, 8 A.M.

Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs has again reverted to his first position as regards Article 29 of Treaty of Berlin. He said that circumstances had now changed somewhat. Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs had informed Servian Minister that he was not satisfied with Servian Circular,⁽¹⁾ and that he required assurances as regards disarmament and definite recognition by Servia of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs had informed Austrian Ambassador here that he did not see how Servia could recognize what Signatory

Powers to Treaty of Berlin had not yet recognized, and it appeared to him improbable that England, France and Russia would press Serbia to do so before they had themselves officially accepted it.

Under the circumstances he saw no way out of the difficulty but to assemble Conference at once. Conditions which Austria had raised as preliminaries to Conference had now been fulfilled. He further told Austrian Ambassador that, unless he received a formal assurance that Article 29 would be modified in favour of Montenegro, he would not even acknowledge receipt of communication of Austro-Hungarian Protocol.

He told me he had had a personal assurance from the Austrian Government to that effect, but he required formal assurance which he could utilize in view of pledges he had given here in the Chamber.

(Repeated to Vienna.)

No. 680.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Private and Confidential.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Berlin, March 13, 1909.

Many thanks for your letter of the 4th inst. No one realises more than I do the fact that here in Berlin while one Minister of Foreign Affairs is saying one thing, the other two or three may be holding quite different language. No later than last week there was a fine example of this, for while Schoen was deploring to me Aehrenthal's unmanageable character and the stiffness of his attitude, Kiderlen in the very next room was drafting the "Norddeutsche" communiqué! He admitted to Cambon afterwards that he had written it in order to stiffen the people as there had been far too much criticism in the Press and elsewhere with regard to Aehrenthal and his policy. Cambon pitched into him about it, saying that it might do mischief and create the impression that Germany did not care whether war ensued or not. Kiderlen replied that that impression would be quite wrong adding in his somewhat brutal manner "We certainly do not want war—as Russia would be sure to get a beating and that would mean a revolution followed by a republic. That would not suit our book at all. Especially as we are not ready for one ourselves yet." (2)

Yours very sincerely,

W. E. GOSCHEN.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 22.]

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this despatch deals with the German attitude towards the proposed conference, and Austro-Servian relations.]

No. 681.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 14, 1909.

F.O. 9726/26/09/44A.

D. 7.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 70.)

R. 9.40 P.M.

German Ambassador, who had just been with Baron von Aehrenthal, called on me to-day and expressed himself on the situation as follows:—

All now depends on Servian reply to Austro-Hungarian representations recently made at Belgrade.⁽¹⁾ This reply is expected in a few days. If it leaves the door open for further negotiations, Baron von Aehrenthal will continue them, but not for an unlimited time. A solution must be arrived at rapidly. Point chiefly insisted on

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 663-4, No. 659, and *infra*, pp. 697-8, No. 706.]

by Austria is clear proof of Serbia's pacific intentions, such as will satisfy military party. The latter are exerting great pressure on Baron von Aehrenthal to act with vigour. Should he be compelled to do so, German Ambassador has strongly advised him, before launching ultimatum to Serbia, to issue Circular to the Powers containing his justification of Austria's case. He feels convinced Baron von Aehrenthal will do nothing precipitately.

German Ambassador said Germany had little interest in the fate of Serbia, but she had a great one in the fate of Austria-Hungary. She would stand by her ally and protect her if necessary.

No. 682.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 14, 1909.

F.O. 9721/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 141.)

D. 7.56 P.M.

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your telegrams Nos. 301⁽¹⁾ and 302.⁽²⁾

M. Isvolsky has not telegraphed to Belgrade, but he proposes to do so to-day, and to advise Servian Government to endeavour, in informal conversation with Austrian Minister, to find a formula which will satisfy Austria. He proposes at the same time to inform Vienna and Berlin of the fresh step which he has taken. He does not wish to specify terms of formula, but he desires to show that Russia is not open to the reproach of having deterred Serbia from taking any steps or from making any declaration which may facilitate an understanding between her and Austria. If Serbia is willing to accept Austro-Turkish Protocol, he would raise no objection, as any action of Serbia in that respect would have no binding effect whatever on the Powers.

I think he would be glad if Mr. Whitehead were instructed to support, if required, advice which Russian Minister may give Servian Government, and he also thinks that some friendly advice to Berlin and Vienna to be conciliatory and generous would be opportune at what he considers to be a critical moment. His impression is that Berlin is almost more exacting and impervious than Vienna.

One of his telegrams from Berlin which he read to me mentioned Buchlau Protocol. I asked what it meant. He said there was no Protocol at all.

I think that dread of a conflict between Austria and Serbia and the position in which Russia would be placed are weighing heavily on M. Isvolsky, and that he would leave no stone unturned to prevent hostilities if possible.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. Repeating Telegram No. 109 to Sir F. Cartwright, *v. supra*, p. 674, No. 674, note 1.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. In it Sir E. Grey consulted Sir A. Nicolson as to instructions to be sent to Mr. Whitehead.]

No. 683.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, March 15, 1909.

F.O. 10012/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 20.)

D. 1.30 P.M.

R. 3.45 P.M.

Servian Gov[ernmen]t sent the following reply last night to the Austrian Note of March 6th through Servian Legation at Vienna:⁽¹⁾

"The Royal Gov[ernmen]t have set forth in their circular telegram of March 10th⁽²⁾ which has been communicated to the Imperial and Royal Gov[ernmen]t as well as to

⁽¹⁾ [Sir Fairfax Cartwright's despatch No. 40, of same date, transmitted a version stating in the covering letter, "I am informed that the text was communicated to and appeared in the press before it actually reached the Ballplatz." *cp. also, supra*, pp. 663-4, No. 659, and *infra*, pp. 697-8, No. 706.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 666, No. 662.]

all other signatory Powers of the Treaty of Berlin their point of view in regard to the question of Bosnia and Herzegovina and they have on that occasion stated that Serbia, considering that juridical relations between herself and Austria-Hungary have remained normal, desired to continue to fulfil towards the neighbouring Monarchy on the basis of reciprocity the duties of a good neighbour and to maintain with her the relations concerning their mutual interests of a material order.

“The Royal Gov[ernment]t is therefore of opinion that it would be (?) honestly in conformity with material interests of the two parties and with bonds created by treaty signed last year which has already been given the force of law in Serbia if the Gov[ernment]ts of the Monarchy were to submit this treaty of commerce to the approbation of the Parliaments at Vienna and Buda-Pest although the term fixed for its ratification has already expired. The acceptance of this treaty by the Parliaments would at the same time have furnished the most certain means of avoiding any interruption of treaty relations. Its rejection by the Parliaments would have given occasion either to fix a clear point of departure for eventual negotiations for the conclusion of a new treaty or on the other hand to show that the views of the Parliaments with their agrarian tendencies made it advisable to abandon in general any idea of concluding a treaty with a conventional tariff between Serbia and Austria-Hungary.

“In case Austria-Hungary in consequence of insufficient time or for reasons of a parliamentary nature should not have been able by March 31st to obtain parliamentary sanction for the treaty which Serbia has concluded with her the Royal Gov[ernment]t would be ready to accept if it was proposed to them a further provisional application of the treaty up to December 31st of this year.”

MINUTES.

An insolent reply.

A. P. March 15/09.

I am afraid Serbia has put herself in the wrong by the tone of this reply.

R. P. M.

This reply does not meet the Austrian requirements in any particular and is impertinent in substance. The Austrian answer will probably be in the nature of an ultimatum but we are told that, before taking extreme measures, they will circularize the Powers, which will give us the opportunity of coercing Serbia into a proper frame of mind. Some allowance must be made for the internal situation in Serbia and they would probably welcome coercion which they may be playing for, but it is a dangerous game.

By this move they have put themselves *and the Powers* in the wrong.

L. M.

Nothing to be done but to wait for the effect of this upon Austria.

E. G.

No. 684.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 9746/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 15, 1909.

Tel. (No. 308.)

D. 3 P.M.

Bulgarian Independence.

I entirely approve Y[our] E[xc]ellency's language, as reported in your telegrams Nos. 139 and 140.⁽¹⁾

Repeated to Constantinople, No. 179.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 677, Nos. 677-8.]

No. 685.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 9721/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 15, 1909.

Tel. (No. 75.)

D. 3.45 P.M.

Austro-Servian Relations. Sir A. Nicolson's tel[egram] No. 141.⁽¹⁾

You should offer to support your Russian colleague in advising Servian Gov[ernmen]t to endeavour, in informal conversation with Austrian Minister, to find a formula which would completely satisfy Austria. As Serbia appears to have met Austria in substance as regards territorial claims, it would be deplorable, on a pure matter of form, to jeopardise the interests of peace, not to mention the commercial advantages, so essential to Serbia, which are likely to result from an early and precise understanding with Austria. If Serbia is directly pressed by Austria to recognize annexation and advised by Russia to do so, it is hardly our business to object; but we cannot recommend her to recognize Austro-Turkish protocol before the Powers have done so; Austria should be satisfied if Serbia promises to recognize any alteration of Treaty of Berlin respecting Bosnia, which is recognized by the Treaty Powers. It would be desirable for you therefore to say nothing on this point unless your opinion is directly asked.

Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 309, Vienna, No. 115, and Berlin, No. 77.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 679, No. 682.]

No. 686.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, March 15, 1909.

F.O. 10013/26/09/44A.

D. 4 P.M.

Tel. (No. 21.)

R. 5 P.M.

My immediately preceding tel[egram].⁽¹⁾

Austrian Minister considers Servian Reply to his note of March 6th entirely unsatisfactory and says that it will make the worst possible impression in Vienna, because instead of promising a change of attitude, and readiness to enter into negotiations on commercial questions, it merely criticises in an offensive manner the action of the Austrian and Hungarian Gov[ernmen]ts in regard to the commercial treaty.

As late as March 12th Servian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] promised to prepare several alternative drafts and consult confidentially Count Forgach as to exact terms of the Servian reply, but he did not do so. Austrian Minister had also received satisfactory assurances from Servian Prime Minister. He believes that the King of Serbia and the Servian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] were opposed to the reply as now sent, but that they were overborne by other members of the Cabinet, especially Minister of Finance and the Leader of the Young Radical Party.

My French colleague, while admitting that the situation has become more complicated by this reply thinks that the Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] may be inclined to take a more lenient view of it than Austrian Minister. He suggested that Servian reply to Russian advice may desire to provoke a direct threat of coercion in order to appear to yield only to *force majeure*.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 679-80, No. 683.]

No. 687.

*Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.**Pera, March 15, 1909.*

F.O. 10019/26/09.

D. 7.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 86.)

R. 9.40 P.M.

Grand Vizier told me to-day he hoped that Arrangement with Russia was practically concluded *ad referendum*, although he still awaited the details. Russia wished to make a condition that Bulgarian independence should be immediately recognized. To this his Highness could not agree, as there were still several questions for settlement between the two countries. He wished to defer actual recognition till meeting of Conference.

I urged his Highness not to endanger settlement with Russia by deferring recognition until then, and, if possible, to recognize independence directly questions of compensation were actually settled. He wishes to see full text of Arrangement proposed before taking decision.

MINUTES.

This is not in accordance with the advice given to Rifaat by Sir A. Nicolson in his Nos. 139 and 140.⁽¹⁾ Both these telegrams and one approving Sir A. Nicolson's language were repeated to Const[antino]ple about 3 in the afternoon yesterday. Sir G. Lowther had probably not received them when he sent off this telegram.

R. P. M.

A private Telegram might be sent to Sir G. Lowther calling his attention to Sir A. Nicolson's telegrams No. 139 and No. 140 and to your entire concurrence in Sir A. Nicolson's views and language. He should let the Grand Vizier know that with the addition suggested by Sir A. Nicolson in Tel[egram] No. 140, the proposal would be unobjectionable.

L. M.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 677, Nos. 677-8.]

No. 688.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 9721/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 15, 1909.

Tel. (No. 116.)

Austro-Servian Relations. My telegram No. 75 of March 15th to Belgrade.⁽¹⁾

You should inform Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited that H[is] M[ajesty's] Minister at Belgrade is instructed to support Russian advice there to find a formula which will satisfy the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t.

Also to Sir E. Goschen, No. 79. Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 310, and Belgrade, No. 76.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 681, No. 685.]

No. 689.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10387/26/09/44A.

Vienna, D. March 15, 1909.

(No. 39.) Confidential.

R. March 18, 1909.

Sir,

I have the honour to report that yesterday evening Herr von Tschirschky, the German Ambassador, called on me after having seen Baron von Aehrenthal, and engaged in a conversation on the present state of affairs, the brief substance of which I sent to you in my Telegram No. 70 of last night.⁽¹⁾

Herr von Tschirschky stated to me that a current of pessimism was running strongly through Society here as well as to a great extent through the official world, and although this pessimism appeared to him to be somewhat exaggerated, he could not deny that the situation was daily becoming more complicated and the outlook

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 678-9, No. 681.]

therefore less bright. I said to him that Baron von Aehrenthal had told me only two days ago that he would do nothing until he had received the Servian reply to the representations made by Count Forgach at Belgrade, and that if this reply was fairly satisfactory he would continue the negotiations with the neighbouring Kingdom in the hope that with patience he would finally succeed in settling the so-called Servian crisis peacefully. Herr von Tschirschky said to me that Baron von Aehrenthal undoubtedly desired the maintenance of peace and would continue to show great patience towards Serbia but he was not entirely master of the situation: he had to count with public opinion, and especially with the opinion of the military experts. Public opinion, it was true, was certainly averse to war; nevertheless, everybody felt that the present tension could not be borne much longer and that the situation must be definitely and rapidly cleared up, either by peaceful or by warlike means. The five months which have elapsed since the beginning of the crisis have given the Austro-Hungarian military authorities the time necessary to put the army on a thoroughly efficient footing, and—according to Herr von Tschirschky—the moment is coming when, in the opinion of the military experts, Serbia must disarm of her own free will or be compelled to do so. I said to Herr von Tschirschky that more than once I had advised Baron von Aehrenthal not to do anything rashly and not to launch an ultimatum to Serbia before first giving the Powers time to make a last effort through friendly mediation to avoid the outbreak of a war which it would be difficult to localise. I added to the German Ambassador that if Baron von Aehrenthal precipitated matters the public opinion of the world would run strongly against him and this would probably embitter the struggle and delay the restoration of peace between the combatants. Herr von Tschirschky assured me that he had given very similar advice to Baron von Aehrenthal and that he felt convinced that before launching his ultimatum the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs would issue a Circular to the Powers setting forth the reasons which had compelled Austria-Hungary to take vigorous action against Serbia. I pointed out to the Ambassador that Serbia had now withdrawn all territorial claims to Bosnia and Herzegovina and that she had practically expressed her intentions of living at peace with Austria-Hungary, and that therefore, unless some unforeseen frontier incident should occur, I saw no reason why Austria-Hungary should do anything of a hostile character to that little Kingdom. Herr von Tschirschky then said that the trouble was that the words of Serbia did not in all respects correspond with her acts: while professing peaceful intentions her Government had just summoned for military training what the Ambassador called the “Landsturm” of Serbia, the last reserves. A Government only did that when they foresaw that a desperate fight was inevitable, and as it was clear to the world that Austria-Hungary would not fight Serbia if she would only keep within the limits assigned to her by the Powers at the Berlin Congress, impartial people could but conclude that Serbia harboured a design of doing something to precipitate a war. In one sense, he said, Serbia professed to give up her so-called claims, and yet she laid what she termed her case in the hands of the Powers and had made no declaration that if that undefined case were rejected by them she would abide peacefully by the decision arrived at by the Conference. The situation was therefore this, that Austria-Hungary was compelled to keep up an army on a war footing for an indefinite time to come until an European Conference should have had the time to settle the Servian claims; the Austro-Hungarian army could not afford to give up being prepared for all eventualities should Serbia, dissatisfied with the results of the Conference, indulge in acts of aggression against the Dual Monarchy. Herr von Tschirschky declared that the aims of Servian diplomacy were clear enough namely to delay matters as much as possible, to leave everything vague and undefined and so to gain time until Russia should be ready to come to the assistance of the oppressed Serbs. He told me that this state of things could not be allowed to continue for many weeks more, and that unless the Powers acted more rapidly Austria-Hungary would be compelled to prick herself the

Servian bubble, as he called it. I replied to him that whether it was a bubble or not, when pricked by Austria-Hungary alone it would explode probably with a great deal of force and perhaps bring about a European war. His answer was that if the Powers really desired peace they had only to leave Austria-Hungary and Servia to fight it out alone, Austria-Hungary being perfectly willing to announce to the Powers that she guaranteed the integrity of the Servian dominions which was all that could interest the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Congress. I observed to him that Russian public opinion was a factor which could not be entirely ignored at the present moment, and that if Austria-Hungary invaded Servia the Russian Government might be forced to act. Herr von Tschirschky's reply was that the moral sense of the Powers ought to compel them to do their utmost to restrain Russia from indulging in an adventure which in reality in no way regarded her. It was an understood thing ever since the Congress of Berlin that Servia fell within the sphere of Austro-Hungarian influence in the Balkans, and that Bulgaria, on the other hand, fell within the sphere of Russian influence.⁽²⁾ By repeated engagements, secret and otherwise, Russia had abandoned the Servian cause, and for her to take it up now was simply due to the personal animosity which unfortunately inspired Monsieur Isvolsky against Baron von Aehrenthal, and the German Ambassador thought that the Powers ought not to allow personal sentiments of this kind to interfere with the real interests of Europe.

Here the conversation turned on Monsieur Isvolsky. Herr von Tschirschky asked me whether I had seen in the newspapers reports to the effect that Monsieur Isvolsky was planning another sensational *coup* by offering to wipe out the whole of the Turkish war indemnity in return for the purchase or lease of the Sanjak which would then be presented as a Russian gift to Servia. I said to him that these rumours had reached me but that I did not attach much importance to them as I had heard from the Turkish Ambassador here that nothing would induce the Porte to entertain such a proposal. Herr von Tschirschky did not place the same confidence in the resisting power of the Turkish Government to pecuniary offers but he told me—and I suppose he did so by desire of Baron von Aehrenthal—that if the idea existed anywhere of uniting Montenegro to Servia by the Sanjak, Austria-Hungary would oppose it to the utmost and, if necessary, might go to war to prevent it. I may here mention that quite recently I alluded to these rumours in talking to Baron von Aehrenthal, and he then said to me, in an off-hand manner: "le Sanjak est maintenant à la Turquie, il ne nous regarde plus." The meaning of these words is not quite clear and Baron von Aehrenthal, on reflection, may wish to qualify them by adding that so long as the Sanjak remains in the hands of Turkey, he will not trouble himself any more about it. That does not exclude the possibility of his taking a great interest in it should it pass into the hands of others.

In conclusion, I enquired of the German Ambassador what attitude Germany would assume in the case of hostilities breaking out between Russia and Austria-Hungary. His answer was concise: Germany cared little about Servia and her fate; she was watching the present dispute between Austria-Hungary and her neighbour calmly and impartially like an outsider; she might give advice now and then as a friend to her Ally but she would not interfere in preventing her from carrying out what in the opinion of the German Government was after all a legitimate policy. What interested Germany however in the first degree was the maintenance of the integrity of the Hapsburg Monarchy in this part of Europe; its existence under present circumstances was a necessity for the safety of the German Empire; therefore the Powers must make no mistake in supposing that in a struggle between Russia and Austria-Hungary Germany would remain indifferent: if Austria-Hungary showed signs of being seriously injured in the struggle, Germany would draw her sword and come to the assistance of her Ally. As for France, Herr von Tschirschky did not believe she would move: for thirty-

(2) [Marginal comment by Sir C. Hardinge: "This is quite a new theory.—C. H."]

eight years she had made no attempt to recover Alsace-Lorraine, and no serious statesmen expected that she would now risk the chance of losing more of her national territory for the sake of Serbia.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 690.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11789/26/09/44A.

(No. 167.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 15, 1909.

R. March 29, 1909.

During the past three or four days I have had several interviews with M. Iswolsky, the substance of which I venture to report for the purpose of record.

The Servian Circular was communicated to M. Iswolsky by the Servian Minister on the 16th instant [*sic*],⁽¹⁾ and though it contained certain phrases which M. Iswolsky thought might better have been omitted, still he was of opinion that on the whole it offered assurances which should satisfy the Vienna Cabinet. On the same day M. Iswolsky had received communication of two telegrams which Baron d'Aehrenthal had addressed to the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador here, and which in M. Iswolsky's opinion considerably modified any hopes which might be entertained that the Servian Circular would meet with a favourable reception in Vienna. These telegrams were in substance that the Servian Government were anxious that the Powers should immediately examine the Austro-Turkish protocol with the view of accepting it, and that Serbia would then be ready to enter into direct negotiations in regard to a Commercial Treaty. The telegrams also gave the text of a declaration which should be made by the Servian Government practically recognising and accepting the Protocol as a final settlement of the question of the annexation of the two provinces; and the Russian Government were requested to advise Serbia to enter on the path which the Vienna Cabinet had indicated.

These communications had confirmed M. Iswolsky in a conviction, which he has for long held, that the Austro-Hungarian Government are determined to impose such conditions on Serbia as would imply complete and absolute submission on her part to the dictates of Vienna, or by Serbia's refusals of such conditions that Austria-Hungary would have an apparent justification for the employment of forcible measures.⁽²⁾ Moreover, M. Iswolsky considered it most incorrect on the part of the Austrian Government to request that Russia should advise Serbia to accept a protocol which the Russian Government themselves had not yet admitted. Moreover, after all that Russia had already done in inducing Serbia to exhibit a pacific and patient disposition, it was requiring too much of Russia that she should go so far as to counsel Serbia to take a step which it was well known would be an exceedingly difficult if not an impossible one for any Servian Government to adopt. M. Iswolsky regarded these communications as evidence that Austria-Hungary knew that she was demanding the impossible, and that she was merely seeking to lay the responsibility for the measures which she was contemplating on the shoulders either of Russia or of Serbia. He was, therefore, at first inclined to take no action whatever in regard to the telegrams which Count Berchtold had communicated to him; to state to the latter that he could give no reply until he was aware what impression the Servian Circular had produced in Vienna: and to inform the Vienna Cabinet that the Russian Government had received the Austro-Turkish protocol and were ready to discuss it with the other Powers in Conference. He wished to maintain the attitude which he had adopted in his Circular to the Powers, and in his correspondence with the Austro-Hungarian Government that

(1) [This appears to be an error. The two telegrams referred to as having been communicated "on the same day" were received on the 11th, *v. supra*, p. 668, No. 666. The Circular was communicated to Austria and Germany on the 11th, *v. supra*, p. 669, Nos. 667 and 668.]

(2) [But see *Siebert* (1921), No. 288, p. 256.]

the annexation was a matter of European concern and had not been finally settled by an arrangement between Austria-Hungary and Turkey.

When M. Iswolsky learnt that the Vienna Cabinet was not satisfied with the terms of the Servian Circular, which was considered ambiguous in some passages, and when he heard that the Austrian Government were contemplating an ultimatum to Servia, and when his advices from Berlin stated that Germany was determined to support her ally to all extremities, he became uneasy lest an outbreak of hostilities was imminent. His Excellency is, no doubt, deeply impressed by the fact that Russia is not in a position to go to war with two powerful neighbours, and he does not feel that he is justified in relying with any certainty on Russia obtaining any effective aid from France. He finds himself in the dilemma of having to brave public opinion here by either abandoning Servia or advising her to make any terms which she can with Austria, or of finding himself placed in the position of having to support Servia by force of arms. He had intended to abstain from giving any more advice to Servia. He felt that he had gone as far as possible, or as his many adversaries here assert, far further than was necessary, in counselling Servia to abandon her claims for territorial compensation. More he considered he could not do, and, as he told my French colleague, Russia had exhausted all her efforts to find a pacific solution, and must leave to the course of events the ultimate decision. The pressure of circumstances has, however, modified this attitude, and he has now taken a further step at Belgrade by advising the Servian Government to endeavour to come to terms with the Austrian Minister at Belgrade as to a "formula" which will be considered entirely satisfactory at Vienna. He would even view with equanimity if the Servian Government were to express their recognition of the Austro-Turkish protocol, as he considered that such a declaration on their part would in no wise alter the attitude of the Powers signatories of the Berlin Treaty. In short he would be prepared for Servia making a complete submission to Austria-Hungary. Whether Servia will be disposed to do so is an open question, and whether Russian public opinion will condone the policy of M. Iswolsky in this respect is also a very open question. When Baron d'Aehrenthal becomes aware that Russia is yielding, and in a sense abandoning Servia, his task will naturally be easier, and if Servia is equally conciliatory the dangers of a conflict will of course be immensely diminished if not entirely removed. The latest line of M. Iswolsky is not a bold one though in present conditions it may be a prudent one. It is unfortunate that, as is I fear undoubtedly the case, Russia held out until recently hopes to Servia that she would obtain territorial compensations and that Russia would employ every diplomatic and pacific means to secure them for her. It would have been better, and perhaps juster to Servia, if from the outset the true situation had been explained to her.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 691.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, March 16, 1909.

F.O. 10043/26/09/44A.

D. 1.40 A.M.

Tel. (No. 26.)

R. 8 A.M.

Austria and Servia.

Prince Bülow told me to-night that situation was serious, but that he still thought war might be avoided. I asked him what, in his opinion, would be best means of preventing it. He said that if Servia asked Austria-Hungary to enter into direct negotiations for Commercial Treaty, and at once commenced to disarm, she would find Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs quite ready to meet her. But the disarmament was a *sine qua non*.

He said that Conference was impossible unless all important points were settled beforehand. Conference could not be carried out without Turkey, and latter would not join if there was a chance of free discussion as to Crete, Albania, and other points in which she was interested.

MINUTES.

I suppose we must wait for the Austrian move but I should be strongly in favour in bringing pressure to bear at Belgrade at the earliest possible moment.

I do not quite know what is meant by disarmament. Count Metternich whom I saw last night used similar language and I replied that their army was not on a war footing. He seemed to doubt this.

L. M.
E. G.

No. 692.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 8764/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 16, 1909.

Tel. (No. 192.)

D. 1.10 P.M.

I have, in acknowledging receipt from Austrian Ambassador of Austro-Turkish Protocol, replied as follows:—

“As Y[our] E[xcellency] will recollect, I have already expressed to you my satisfaction that an agreement on this question should have been reached between the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Gov[ernmen]ts.

“Since the Austro-Turkish Protocol involves an alteration of the Treaty of Berlin it requires to be submitted to all the Signatory Powers, and H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are fully prepared to enter into discussions as to the meeting of a Conference to deal with this question and others also, as to which it would now appear that sufficient preliminary agreement has been or is on the point of being reached.”

Also to Sir E. Goschen No. 81; Sir F. Cartwright No. 122; Sir G. Lowther No. 185; Sir A. Nicolson No. 316; Sir R. Rodd No. 107.

⁽¹⁾ [A similar communication was made in writing by Sir Edward Grey to Count Mensdorff on the same day in acknowledging the receipt of the Austro-Russian protocol.]

No. 693.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 16, 1909.

F.O. 10149/26/09/44A.

D. 3.5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 146.)

R. 3.30 P.M.

Austria and Servia.

M. Iswolsky has received no direct news either from Vienna or Belgrade as to Servian reply. I read to him substance of Mr. Whitehead's tel[egram] No. 21,⁽¹⁾ and told him steps H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had taken at Berlin and Vienna. He thinks that there is nothing more to be done though he will consult Emperor this evening as to whether something might be said at Berlin and Vienna, but he doubts whether anything now will be of practical effect. Perhaps when the Austrian ultimatum is presented to Servia Powers might see whether any further steps would be of any avail.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 681, No. 686.]

He assures me that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t are united and determined if possible to restrain public opinion in the event of Austrian attack on Servia, but public opinion is an unknown quantity. He thinks that calmer views are prevailing in political circles here and that it may be possible to avoid Russia being dragged into a conflict.

No. 694.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 9721/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 16, 1909.

Tel. (No. 318.)

D. 5.35 P.M.

Your telegram No. 141.⁽¹⁾ Austro-Servian Relations.

I do not think that friendly advice at Berlin and Vienna would tend to ease the situation at present, as we should only be told that what was needed now was representations at Belgrade.

It seems to me that Servian Gov[ernmen]t made a mistake in not taking advantage of opportunity to consult Count Forgach informally as to terms of their reply, as Austrian Gov[ernmen]t suggested; if such consultation had shown that Austria was making impossible and excessive demands then would have been the opportunity for some communication at Berlin and Vienna.

Repeated Belgrade, No. 80; Vienna, No. 124; Berlin, No. 83.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 679, No. 682.]

No. 695.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 10277/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 16, 1909.

Tel. (No. 125.)

D. 8 P.M.

Austrian Ambassador asked me what I meant by discussion of meeting of Conference.

I told him we now had a preliminary arrangement with regard to Austro-Turkish difficulty, another was practically concluded about Bulgaria, I understood there could be one at any time about alteration of Article 29 in favour of Montenegro. Austrian Gov[ernmen]t might urge that there was no preliminary agreement about Servia until it was settled that in discussing her case no territorial or political claims would be put forward at Conference and question of commercial treaty would not be brought before it. If so I thought that such an understanding would be forthcoming.

Ambassador asked me what else the Conference would discuss: I replied that none of the other points in the programme were subjects of acute difference: if raised there would be no risk of their being pressed to point of danger. All Powers, for I included Austria in spite of all rumours, desired peace and if any subject hitherto undiscussed proved dangerous at the Conference there would be general disposition to drop it. It would be worth while for Conference to meet the moment we had preliminary agreement on what had been points of acute controversy; a final settlement of these by a Conference would secure peace.

Repeated to Paris, No. 193; St. Petersburg, No. 320; Rome, No. 108; Berlin, No. 84.

No. 696.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, March 16, 1909.*

F.O. 10160/26/09/44A.

D. 9 P.M.

Tel. (No. 147.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

Russo-Turkish Protocol was initialled to-day *ad referendum*. It was in the terms mentioned in my telegram No. 145.⁽¹⁾ Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs showed me a Declaration signed by M. Isvolsky to the effect that abandonment by Russia of forty annuities should not come into force until Turkey had informed Signatory Powers that she no longer opposed recognition of new order of things in Bulgaria.

I hope that Declaration, which M. Isvolsky never mentioned to me, will not weaken position of Russian Government. Turkish Minister for Foreign Affairs tells me M. Isvolsky insisted much on an exchange of Declarations, and that he could not refuse. I venture still to think they were superfluous.

MINUTES.

It will seriously weaken our position if Turkey agrees to recognize Bulgarian independence at once but we may hope this is a mare's nest.

L. M.

Our position will in any case remain the same.

C. H.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—The following text of the Russo-Turkish Agreement, initialled *ad referendum* on March 8/16, is taken from Appendix I of Mr. A. Parker's memorandum of July 29, 1909, and is inserted here for convenience of reference. The text of the treaty as signed at St. Petersburg on 8/21 December, 1909, is given in G. Fr. de Martens: *Nouveau Recueil Général de Traités . . . continuation . . . par Heinrich Triepel*, Leipzig (1911), 3rd ser., Vol. IV, pp. 54-6. For the difference in Article III, *v. infra*, p. 792, Article I of Turco-Bulgarian Protocol of April 6/19, 1909.]

Text of Russo-Turkish Agreement.

Le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie, désireux d'assurer au Gouvernement Impérial ottoman une somme de 125 millions de francs en règlement des réclamations de la Sublime Porte contre la Bulgarie, il a été convenu ce qui suit:—

Article 1. En vue de permettre à la Sublime Porte de réaliser la somme de 125 millions de francs, le Gouvernement russe fait à la Turquie abandon complet et définitif de quarante annuités sur les soixante-quatorze annuités restant encore dues à la Russie du chef de l'indemnité de guerre fixé par le Traité du 27 janvier (8 février), 1879, et la Convention du 2 (14 mai), 1882; le Gouvernement Impérial ottoman ayant réglé toutes les annuités dues sur l'indemnité de guerre jusqu'au 31 décembre, 1908, le présent abandon prendra date à partir du 1^{er} janvier, 1909.

Art. 2. Le Gouvernement Impérial ottoman aura le droit, jusqu'au 1^{er} juillet prochain, de capitaliser les trente-quatre annuités restantes au-delà des quarante annuités abandonnées par la Russie, en ramenant ces annuités à leur valeur actuelle au taux de 4 pour cent au pair.

Dans le cas où le Gouvernement Impérial ottoman n'userait pas de cette faculté avant le 1^{er} juillet prochain, il aura la même faculté à l'expiration de la quarantième année, la capitalisation devant se faire à cette date au taux du crédit de l'Empire ottoman tel qu'il sera constaté par un accord entre les deux Gouvernements.

Art. 3. La somme de 5½ millions de livres turques, soit 125 millions de francs, revenant au Gouvernement Impérial ottoman, représente, pour 40 millions de francs, la redevance de la Roumélie Orientale, pour 40 autres millions la valeur des 310 kilom. des chemins de fer orientaux sis en Roumélie Orientale et saisis par le Gouvernement bulgare, pour 2 millions de francs, le coût et les loyers arriérés de la ligne Bellova-Vakarel, et pour 43 millions de francs, la contre-valeur des propriétés du domaine de l'État ottoman sises en Roumélie Orientale et en Bulgarie. Le Gouvernement Impérial ottoman renonce, en conséquence, à ses droits découlant de l'article 9 du Traité de Berlin au tribut bulgare, à la part contributive de la Bulgarie à la Dette publique de l'Empire, ainsi qu'à ses droits aux arriérés de redevance de la Roumélie Orientale, telle qu'elle est fixée par le règlement organique et ses annexes à l'exception des mensualités courues depuis septembre 1908.

Art. 4. Le Gouvernement bulgare renonçant, par une déclaration signée en même temps que le présent arrangement, toute réclamation du chef du premier paragraphe de l'article 10 du

Traité de Berlin relatif au Chemin de Fer Roustchouk-Varna, le Gouvernement ottoman prend acte de cette déclaration.

Art. 5. Il est entendu que les questions et créances des vakoufs et communautés religieuses, des postes et télégraphes, des phares, et de l'Administration sanitaire, restent entièrement réservées et feront l'objet d'une entente directe entre le Gouvernement Impérial ottoman et la Bulgarie. Il est également entendu que les dettes directes de la Bulgarie vis-à-vis de la Compagnie des Chemins de Fer orientaux, résultant de transport, de matériel saisi, &c., ainsi que de l'indemnité d'exploitation, sont laissées en dehors du présent arrangement.

Première Déclaration.

Dès que toutes les revendications du Gouvernement Impérial ottoman contre la Bulgarie énumérées à l'article 3 du protocole signé à Saint-Petersbourg, à la même date que la présente déclaration, ainsi que les questions pendantes entre la Turquie et la Bulgarie énumérées à l'article 5 du même protocole, auront été réglées, la Sublime Porte ne s'opposera pas à reconnaître le nouvel état politique de la Bulgarie.

(Signé *ad referendum*) RIFAAT.

Deuxième Déclaration.

Le Gouvernement Impérial de Russie, en consentant à abandonner à la Turquie quarante annuités sur les soixante-quatorze qui lui sont dues, entend que cet abandon n'aura effet qu'après la notification par la Sublime Porte aux Puissances qu'elle ne s'oppose plus à reconnaître le nouvel état politique de la Bulgarie.

(Signé *ad referendum*) ISVOLSKY.]

No. 697.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 10148/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 16, 1909.

Tel. (No. 126.)

D. 11 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 74.⁽¹⁾

Austrian Ambassador informs me that Baron d'Aehrenthal has told Servian Minister that communication of Count Forgach to Servia was made in a friendly spirit in the hope that Servian reply would tend to clear the situation: Servian reply has evaded the Austrian points and has rendered understanding less hopeful. He asked my opinion. I said it was a great pity Servia had not consulted Count Forgach informally as to terms of reply beforehand, being also at liberty as Austrian Ambassador had himself said to consult Ministers of other Powers in the same way.

In my own mind I had sketched out sort of reply which I thought Servia might make and which should satisfy Austria; Servia might have given assurance that she would take no measures, which directly or indirectly would cause difficulties or disturbances in Austrian territory, she would while maintaining her independence and integrity observe all the obligations of friendship and good neighbourhood, she would be glad to take advantage of Austrian offer to enter into direct negotiations for a commercial treaty and if desired she might add that it was not for her to make alterations in the Treaty of Berlin, but that she would accept what was duly recognized by the Powers who were parties to the Treaty.

Austrian Ambassador did not find any fault with this suggestion, but asked what was to be done next, and why Servia had acted so unsatisfactorily. I said that allowance must be made for internal difficulties of Servian Gov[ernment], but so far as I knew Servian reply was not regarded as satisfactory by any of the Powers and if Austria did not ask for anything to which Powers were bound to take exception I thought combined pressure might be forthcoming at Belgrade to get a more favourable reply.⁽²⁾

You can speak in this sense to Baron d'Aehrenthal.

Repeated to Paris, No. 194; Rome, No. 109; Berlin, No. 85; St. Petersburg, No. 321; Belgrade, No. 81.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It describes a conversation with Baron von Call upon the communication of the information contained in Sir E. Grey's Telegram No. 116 of March 15, *supra*, p. 682, No. 688.]

⁽²⁾ [cp. Siebert (1921), p. 252.]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10816/26/09/44A.

(No. 91.)

Sir,

Berlin, D. March 16, 1909.

R. March 22, 1909.

At a dinner given yesterday evening at the Palace to which all the Ambassadors and Ambassadors at this Court had the honour of being invited, there was, as was to be expected from the somewhat alarming telegrams from Vienna and Belgrade, much conversation with regard to the acute stage at which the Austro-Servian crisis had arrived.

I had a short conversation with Prince Bülow. His Serene Highness said it was useless to conceal the fact that the situation was somewhat grave owing to the "impertinent" answer which Serbia had made to Baron Aehrenthal's conciliatory language conveyed to the Servian Government through Count Forgach. He did not, however, consider the situation desperate and if Serbia could only be persuaded to come to her senses, he thought that war might still be avoided. I asked him to give me his opinion as to what ought to be done. He said that the matter was simple: Serbia had only to approach the Austro-Hungarian Government in a proper manner and ask them to enter into negotiations with regard to commercial matters. If she did this and at the same time showed her good intentions by promptly commencing to disarm he was quite sure that Baron Aehrenthal would meet her advances in a conciliatory spirit. But disarmament was a *sine quâ non*. I asked him whether he did not think it a little difficult for Serbia to begin to disarm straight off while Austria-Hungary had so many *corps d'armée* within striking distance. He said "Not at all"; that in the first place Austria-Hungary's military preparations had been enormously exaggerated, and that in the second place Serbia had begun, and been the cause of, the whole trouble. She must therefore now make up her mind to retreat from the false position in which she had placed herself by her extravagant and perfectly unjustifiable attitude. I replied that if I might venture to say so, Austria-Hungary had had something to do with the origin of the trouble. Prince Bülow said that the modification of the Treaty of Berlin by Austria-Hungary had not affected Serbia in the very least. She had lost nothing by it, and it was a matter with which Serbia had no concern at all. That was Baron Aehrenthal's view and he entirely shared it. I said that nevertheless Baron Aehrenthal had at one time consented to allow the question of "advantages to be obtained for Serbia" to stand upon the programme of a conference.⁽¹⁾ He said he was not aware that Baron Aehrenthal had ever consented to that proposal; but I told him that it was true and that in a recent conversation with Sir F. Cartwright he had referred to it and had regretted that the word "international" had not been placed before the word "advantages" as it would better have explained Austria-Hungary's real meaning. This showed that Baron Aehrenthal had, at all events, at one time admitted that Serbia's claim for advantages were [*sic*] at least a matter for discussion. He said that at all events Serbia had gone the wrong way to work and that the way she had recently met the conciliatory advances of Austria-Hungary could not but have the effect of irritating a Great Power like the latter. I said that Austria-Hungary had, it appeared to me, been prone all along to draw the bow too tight, that even small nations had their feelings and, however much their Governments might try to smooth matters down, the people were apt to take the bit in their teeth when pressed too hard. Austria-Hungary seemed to want a great deal; not only renunciation of what Serbia, wrongly perhaps, considered her rights, not only the expression of a formal wish to negotiate directly, but also more or less an apology for all the trouble she had given, and prompt disarmament before Austria-

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal comment by Mr. Mallet: "He omits the word commercial and it is odd that Bülow did not take this up, as he might have based a better argument on that word.—L. M."]

Hungary moved a man from the banks of the Drina. She was also apparently asked to recognize the Austro-Turkish Protocol before even the other Powers had recognized it. Prince Bülow told me what the Servian Government decided the Servian people would swallow; he had never been in Belgrade, but he had been in other Balkan countries, and the people always did what their Governments told them to do. After a few remarks on that subject, I said to him that I could not help regretting that the German Government had not seen their way to joining in the representations you had proposed at Vienna⁽²⁾; they had been devoid of an offence, and they would have almost certainly produced an enlightening statement from Baron Aehrenthal which would have enabled the Powers to have placed matters before Servia in even a stronger and more effectual light than had been possible without such a statement. With a fuller knowledge of Baron Aehrenthal's views and intentions it would probably have been easier to have found a formula which would have satisfied Austria-Hungary, and the present acute situation might have been avoided. He replied that it had been impossible, quite impossible. He had placed the matter before the Emperor both verbally and in writing, and the Emperor had replied with an emphatic "No." He added that the Emperor's engagement with the Emperor Francis Joseph had rendered it quite out of the question for the Emperor to consent.

As you will see from this account, Prince Bülow is for the moment perhaps even more Austrian than the Austrians.

The Italian Ambassador told me afterwards that he had taken the opportunity to lay before Prince Bülow the proposal put forward by M. Tittoni with regard to a Conference, with which you are no doubt acquainted. M. Pansa had previously learnt from the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador that Baron Aehrenthal has expressed himself favourably with regard to the proposal and said that it was quite acceptable. On Prince Bülow showing some hesitation in giving an opinion, M. Pansa asked the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador to join them and repeat to the Chancellor what Baron Aehrenthal had said. On hearing that the latter was favourable to the proposal; he at once said that he also found it quite acceptable and that he would take the earliest opportunity of reporting favourably upon it to the Emperor.

The French Ambassador also had some conversation with the Chancellor during which the latter observed that if, contrary to his hopes and his opinions, a state of war should arise out of the present grave situation, the chief thing to be thought of was how it should be localised. "It would never do," he said, "if we were to begin cutting each other's throats." M. Cambon agreed with His Serene Highness very cordially, throwing out a hint at the same time that he hoped the Chancellor's remark included the friends of France also. The Chancellor answered that he might be depended upon for straining every nerve, if things come to the worst, to localize hostilities, and the French Government must also use all their influence to that end. But he still maintained his opinion that a peaceful solution of the present crisis would be found.

To-day, being Herr von Schoen's official reception day, I called upon His Excellency and, in accordance with your instructions, informed him that His Majesty's Minister at Belgrade had been directed to support his Russian colleague in his advice to the Servian Government to endeavour to find a formula which would satisfy the Austro-Hungarian Government. He expressed his satisfaction and hoped that the advice, which would be very opportune, would have due effect. I asked His Excellency what he thought of the situation. He said that it was undoubtedly grave but that he thought that if the Powers exercised sufficient pressure at Belgrade, peace might still be preserved. I said that if what we read in the papers were only half true hostilities might commence at any moment. No doubt the Powers were giving the best advice at Belgrade, but if Germany could make up her mind to declare at once openly for a Conference, and I understood that there

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 616-17. No. 598.]

were several proposals to that end on hand, it would serve the cause of peace better than anything. Servia had apparently made up her mind not to cease from troubling until the Powers had registered their decisions at a Conference, so surely the best thing would be to provide for its meeting as soon as possible, and at all events to announce that a Conference would certainly be held. Herr von Schoen said that Russia had made a proposal for a Conference of which the programme was not sufficiently defined. On the other hand that proposed by M. Tittoni seemed acceptable. He himself would prefer that the word "Conference" should be used as little as possible, as it aroused apprehensions that other questions besides those decided upon might be raised and discussed. He thought that the same results could be arrived at with less danger by exchanges of views and notes between the Powers. I said that the greatest danger of all lay in delay, and that while we were discussing these small matters of form, guns might go off on the Servian frontier. He said that if everyone wished it, the German Government would have no objection to a Conference, but that it must be on perfectly defined and restricted lines. I told His Excellency that everyone knew Austria-Hungary's wishes on that point and that those wishes were apparently being treated with the greatest consideration.

The Italian Ambassador subsequently discussed M. Tittoni's proposal with Herr von Schoen. The latter again stated that he found the proposal acceptable in principle, and again reiterated his opinion that he would prefer an exchange of opinions and notes to a Conference.

It is difficult to form a definite idea of the German policy for the moment. Those entrusted with the conduct of foreign affairs state that they desire peace, but they seem to be averse, or at all events to shrink from taking any definite or active steps towards maintaining it. It has no doubt struck you that the proposal put forward by M. Tittoni indicates a Conference of the kind which Austria-Hungary has often expressed her readiness to accept, namely one which would confine itself to registering accomplished facts concerning which no dangerous discussion can arise. It is difficult therefore to explain why Germany and Austria-Hungary have not at once seized upon this proposal with avidity and at once signified their assent, instead of losing time by balancing the pros and cons of a Conference and an exchange of notes. I am speaking from their point of view and presupposing that their desire for peace corresponds with their assurances, for I am unaware how far the Italian proposal has met with the approval of other Powers.⁽³⁾

A certain amount of confusion has been created by this proposal having been quoted in the Press as an Austro-Hungarian suggestion for a Conference, but to the great relief of the Italian Ambassador it is now appearing under its proper title. But the confusion shows that the proposal does not err on the side of opposition to Austria-Hungary's views.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

(3) [Marginal comment by Mr. Mallet: "'L'appetit vient en mangeant,' and the more conciliatory one is with Germany the more they ask. If the proposal emanates in reality from Aehrenthal, he probably repents having made it.—L. M."]

[ED. NOTE.—On the important question of German co-operation with Austria-Hungary see Conrad: *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, Bd. I. Wien (1921). Correspondence with General Moltke January 21–March 3, 1909, pp. 379–402. *v. supra*, pp. 685–6, No. 690. Moltke's letter of January 21 was written with the approval of Prince Bülow and the Emperor William II. *cp. Der Krieg*, (February 1928), pp. 5–11, "Ein geheimer deutschösterreichischer *casus fœderis*," and Dr. Kanner: *Der Schlüssel zur Kriegsschuldfrage*. Munich (1926). *v. also infra*, p. 706, No. 718, *Ed. note*, and p. 761, No. 802, *Ed. note*.]

No. 699.

*Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.**Belgrade, March 17, 1909.*

F.O. 10308/26/09/44A.

D. 6.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 23.)

R. 8.15 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

I ventured to read to Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs second paragraph of your telegram No. 126 to Vienna⁽²⁾ from "in my own mind" to "parties to this Treaty."

His Excellency said he was almost certain he could induce Servian Government to make a declaration in substantially those terms, especially if it was demanded collectively by the Powers.

(¹) [Not reproduced. It reports conversations with M. Milovanović as to the desirability of informal consultation with Count Forgách.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 690, No. 697.]

No. 700.

*Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.**Vienna, March 17, 1909.*

F.O. 10301/26/09/44A.

D. 7.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 76.)

R. 9.45 P.M.

Austro-Turkish Protocol.

Your telegram No. 122.⁽¹⁾

I spoke to Minister for Foreign Affairs this afternoon with regard to your views as to meeting of Conference communicated to Austrian Ambassador.⁽²⁾ He told me he would not reply to them immediately, but would await result of proposal now being made to Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs by Prince Bülow. This is to the effect that each point in programme of proposed Conference should be independent and formally settled by exchange of notes between the Signatory Powers as soon as it is ripe for such a purpose. Baron von Aehrenthal said that three points were practically ready for final approval by the Powers, namely, the Austro-Turkish Protocol, the Turco-Bulgarian Agreement, and proposed alteration of Article 29 of Berlin Treaty. His Excellency prefers Prince Bülow's suggestion for settling these questions to idea of summoning Conference to do so.

MINUTES.

Prince Bülow's suggestion seems an excellent one.

A. P.

It will get us out of the difficulties of discussing Capitulations and Customs increase at present.

R. P. M.

We could not agree, unless Russia agreed, and we should not let Austria think that we are ready to drop the Conference at this stage—otherwise I agree with Mr. Maxwell especially as it would be Prince Bülow's suggestion to drop Capitulations etc., which would relieve us of difficulty at Constantinople.

L. M.

It is not very likely that M. Isvolsky will accept Prince Bülow's suggestion which is made in the interest of B[ar]on Aehrenthal, but our attitude must depend entirely on that of M. Isvolsky.

C. H.
E. G.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 687, No. 692, repeated to Sir F. Cartwright.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 688, No. 695.]

No. 701.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, March 17, 1909.*

F.O. 10313/26/09/44A.

D. 8.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 150.) Confidential.

R. 9.45 P.M.

There are signs that certain doubts are increasing here as to the utility of the *entente* with Great Britain, and there is a feeling that neither the *entente* nor the French alliance has been of much benefit to Russia during present crisis, while aid which Germany has given Austria-Hungary has been cited in contrast. This feeling is not shared by those in the Government who are aware of loyal manner in which His Majesty's Government have supported Russia, but I should not be surprised if it were to extend among public if Russia has to remain a passive spectator of any action which Austria may take against Serbia.

M. Isvolsky mentioned to me again quite recently that Germany was always intimating that Russia was on a wrong course in holding to England; and perhaps the last move of Germany here⁽¹⁾ may be a preliminary to an attempt to draw Russia gradually into the German orbit.

MINUTES.

I do not quite follow the reasoning of this telegram. The Public, who do not reflect, would be more likely to resent Germany's action than ours and I should not imagine that a proposal to drop the Conference would be agreeable to M. Isvolsky but it may suit his arrangement with Turkey to recognize Bulgarian independence at once.

L. M.

We can only wait and see. There is no doubt that the idea of a revival of the "Drei Kaiserbund" has for some years past found many supporters in Russia, but I doubt very much whether the Emperor Nicholas would ever agree to it. Although the rival aims of Austria v. Russia may find a temporary solution as was the case with the Murzsteg programme, there is no doubt that the rivalry between the two States in the Balkans is too deep rooted to make any co-operation real and friendly.

C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal comment by Mr. Mallet: "Prince Bülow's proposal to dispense with a Conference, presumably.—L. M."]

No. 702.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 10320/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 17, 1909.

Tel. (No. 330.)

D. 10 P.M.

In reply to a statement from M. Pichon that he wished to support Russian desire for representations at Berlin and Vienna, but would only do it behind Russia and feared it would come to nothing I have said that we should suggest at Berlin and Vienna that Serbia should give Austria assurances that she would take no measures which directly or indirectly would cause difficulties or disturbances in Austrian territory, she would, while maintaining her independence and integrity, observe all the obligations of friendship and good-neighbourhood, she would be glad to take advantage of Austrian offer to enter into direct negotiations for a Commercial Treaty, and, if desired, she might add that it was not for her to make alterations in the Treaty

⁽¹⁾ [A confidential letter from the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London to M. Isvolski of March 17, summarising the British attitude to date, is in *Siebert* (1921), pp. 252-254.]

of Berlin, but that she would accept what was duly recognized by the Powers who were parties to the Treaty.

We should ask whether such assurances would be accepted by Austria and whether if in addition to them Serbia undertook to replace her army on normal peace footing on which it was before recent troubles Austria would promise not to attack Serbia.

If Austrian reply was favourable we should engage to do all we can to induce Serbia to send a note on these lines to Austria.

French Ambassador is favourably impressed by this proposal and thinks his Government will be willing to join in making it to Isvolsky.

You should propose it to Isvolsky as soon as your French colleague hears that his Government agrees with it.

Servian Chargé d'Affaires has just given me a memorandum indicating Serbia would disarm if advised by the Powers collectively.

Repeated to Paris No. 197; Berlin No. 90; Rome No. 112; Vienna No. 130; Belgrade No. 84.

No. 703.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10302/26/09/44A.

Vienna, D. March 17, 1909, 11:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 77.) Confidential.

R. March 18, 1909, 8 A.M.

I dined with the Emperor to-night. His Majesty spoke to me of the situation. He was not despondent, but he was anxious. He told me he had received somewhat better news from Russia. He seemed pleased at this, and expressed hope that Powers would do their best at Belgrade to inspire Servian Government with more conciliatory sentiments towards Austria. He asked for nothing from Serbia except clear proof of cessation of hostile attitude towards this country. His Majesty said that present strained relations could not be allowed to continue much longer, and it would shortly be necessary for his Government to talk to that of Serbia somewhat forcibly. I may add that His Majesty seemed to be in good health, but considerably worried.

No. 704.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10303/26/09/44A.

Vienna, D. March 17, 1909, 11:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 78.)

R. March 18, 1909, 8 A.M.

Your telegram No. 126.⁽¹⁾

I spoke to Baron von Aehrenthal to-day in sense of above-mentioned telegram, and gave him a paraphrase in French of the sort of reply which, in your opinion, Serbia would have been well advised to have given to Austrian note.

His Excellency thought this reply very good as far as it went, but it omitted all reference to one essential point required by Austria, namely, a beginning of disarmament.

I found him calm and still hopeful of peaceful solution, but resolute on the question of Servian disarmament.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 690, No. 697.]

No. 705.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10304/26/09/44A.

Vienna, D. March 17, 1909, 11.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 79.)

R. March 18, 1909, 8 A.M.

I asked Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day his views on Servian reply⁽¹⁾ to Austrian representations. He said it was most disappointing, and a step backwards, instead of a step forward, in solution of present crisis. The Austrian reply to it would be sent in two or three days, and would be rather sharp in tone. He did not wish to press Servia for a hasty answer, but he hoped to get it in about a week. In his opinion it was still possible for situation to be saved if the Powers could only obtain from Belgrade some effective proof of desire for commencement of disarmament.

I understand from him that Austro-Hungarian Government were perfectly prepared to give assurances that they had no wish to attack or injure Servia. His Excellency pointed out that appeal to European Tribunal mentioned in Servian Circular was a great mistake, as Austria-Hungary could not admit she could be summoned in judgment before the European Powers.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 679-80, No. 683.]

No. 706.

[*ED. NOTE.*—A despatch from Mr. Whitehead, No. 34 of March 17, R. March 22, enclosed copies of the following communications. The despatch itself is not reproduced as it is lengthy, and does not add material information.]

(a.)

*Aide-mémoire communicated to Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs by
Count Forgách.*

F.O. 10833/26/09/44A.

March 6, 1909.

Le Gouvernement I[mpérial] et R[oyal] commun d'Autriche-Hongrie se voit à son regret dans la nécessité de porter à la connaissance du Gouvernement Royal Serbe ce qui suit :

En présence de l'attitude observée depuis quelque temps par le Gouvernement Royal Serbe il paraît impossible aux deux Gouvernements de la Monarchie Austro-Hongroise de soumettre au vote des Parlements à Vienne et à Budapest le traité de commerce conclu l'année dernière et dont le terme de ratification est du reste déjà échu. En communiquant ce qui précède au Gouvernement Royal Serbe, le Gouvernement I[mpérial] et R[oyal] commun se plaît à espérer que la Serbie se rendant au conseil des puissances changera son attitude au sujet de la Bosnie et de la Herzégovine et exprimera en même temps son intention bien arrêtée de reprendre avec l'Autriche-Hongrie des rapports de bon voisinage. Le Gouvernement I[mpérial] et R[oyal] commun attend une communication dans ce sens pour ouvrir des nouvelles négociations sur les relations de commerce et de trafic entre la Monarchie et le Royaume de Serbie.

Le 6 mars, 1909.

(b.)

M. Milovanović to the Servian Minister at Vienna.

F.O. 10833/26/09/44A.

(Télégraphique.)

Le 1^{er} (14) mars, 1909.

J'ai l'honneur de vous prier de vouloir bien remettre au Gouvernement Impérial et Royal la réponse suivante à la communication que la Légation d'Autriche-Hongrie m'a faite le 6 de ce mois :—

“Le Gouvernement Royal a exposé dans sa dépêche circulaire du 25 février (10 mars), qui a été remise au Gouvernement Impérial et Royal de même qu'aux

Gouvernements de toutes les Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin, son point de vue dans la question bosno-herzégovinienne, et il a, à cette occasion, constaté que la Serbie, considérant que les rapports juridiques entre elle et l'Autriche-Hongrie sont restés normaux, désire continuer à remplir envers la Monarchie voisine sur la base de la réciprocité les devoirs de bon voisinage et à entretenir avec elle les relations dérivant des intérêts mutuels d'ordre matériel :

“Le Gouvernement Royal est, par conséquent, d'avis qu'il serait le plus conforme tant aux intérêts matériels des deux Parties qu'aux liens créés par le traité signé l'année dernière, qui a déjà reçu la force de loi en Serbie, que les Gouvernements de la Monarchie soumettent à l'approbation des Parlements de Vienne et de Budapest ce traité de commerce, quoique le délai prévu pour sa ratification ait déjà expiré. L'acceptation de ce traité par les Parlements aurait en même temps présenté le moyen le plus sûr pour éviter toute interruption des relations conventionnelles. Son rejet par les Parlements aurait servi soit à fixer le point de départ certain à des négociations éventuelles en vue d'un nouveau traité, soit, au contraire, à faire constater que les tendances des Parlements avec leurs courants agraires conseillent d'abandonner, en général, toute idée de faire un traité au tarif conventionnel entre la Serbie et l'Autriche-Hongrie.

“Au cas où l'Autriche-Hongrie, par suite de l'insuffisance de temps ou pour des raisons d'ordre parlementaire, n'aurait pu faire passer par les Parlements jusqu'au 18 (31) mars le traité de commerce que la Serbie a conclu avec elle, le Gouvernement Royal se tiendrait prêt à accepter, si elle lui était proposée, une nouvelle application provisoire de ce traité jusqu'à la date du 18 (31) décembre de cette année.”

No. 707.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 10552/26/09/44.

(No. 72.)

Sir.

Foreign Office, March 17, 1909.

Count Metternich asked me to-day whether I had any further news about Servia.

I told him the purport of my conversation with Count Mensdorff yesterday,⁽¹⁾ and said that the only thing to be done for the moment was to await the Austrian reply to Servia. I was not making any suggestion, but simply giving him the result of my natural desire to discover some hypothesis in my own mind by which a path might be found through what appeared to be an impenetrable thicket.

Count Metternich said he thought disarmament was the great difficulty.

I asked him whether, speaking quite informally and giving his own personal opinion, as I was doing, he considered that if Servia gave some such assurance as I had sketched, and expressed herself ready to disarm, Austria would be ready to give her an assurance that she would not attack Servia. Some such assurance would be a necessary condition of disarmament on Servia's part, for the air had been thick with rumours that Austria intended to attack Servia in any case, though I had always expressed my personal disbelief in these rumours.

Count Metternich said he thought Austria might give such a promise, if Servia disarmed and gave an assurance of the kind I had sketched.

I said that, of course, what was meant by disarming was not that Servia should disarm altogether, but restore the military position of her Army to what it had been before the trouble.

Count Metternich assented to this.

I told him that I must not be regarded as making a suggestion, for I had not consulted the other Powers, and I did not know their ideas as to what Servia should say. But I did know that the Powers generally were disappointed at the terms of the

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 688, No. 695, and p. 690, No. 697.]

last Servian note to Austria, and I thought that if Austria could be satisfied by a favourable reply from Servia, there would be no disinclination on the part of the Powers to exercise pressure at Belgrade to secure such a reply.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 708.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Constantinople, March 18, 1909.

F.O. 10392/26/09/44.

D. 12.55 A.M.

Tel. (No. 89.) Secret.

R. 11.15 A.M.

My telegram No. 87.⁽¹⁾

Following are the conditions of the Agreement made between Prince Ferdinand and Russian Gov[ernment].

1. Russia guarantees independence of Bulgaria and promises to hasten the recognition without any important sacrifice on the part of Bulgaria.
2. Russia will never allow Bulgaria to be obstructed in mixing in Macedonian question or allow her (?) ecclesiastical interests and her influence over her co-religionists in Macedonia or in Adrianople to be modified.
3. Bulgaria engages not to make war against Turkey or any neighbouring state without previous sanction or approval of Russia.
4. In the event of war with Turkey being inevitable and Bulgaria victorious Russia will not oppose territorial compensation but will support her in obtaining it.
5. Bulgaria agrees not to increase her Black Sea fleet but accepts following arrangement: Bulgaria will send every year to the Russian fleet a number of sailors for training. If war breaks out some of the Russian fleet manned by Bulgarian sailors will be added to the Bulgarian fleet.
6. Emperor will give one of his daughters in marriage to the heir to the Bulgarian throne when he reaches age of twenty.

Grand Vizier declares that he is absolutely certain of authenticity of the arrangement provisionally made by Prince at St. Petersburg. He says that it has been submitted to the Council of Ministers at Sofia and agreed to in principle. He will have from same secret and sure source definite result of their decision.

MINUTES.

If true, this strengthens Russia's position enormously in Europe, and we cannot but rejoice at it from this point of view. It will tend also to bring Turkey into line with Russia and her friends England and France and although, at first sight, Articles 2 and 4 must occasion anxiety, I believe that the agreement, if it is not an invention, may have a steadying effect.

L. M.

I am sceptical as to the accuracy of this alleged agreement. Art[icle] No. 2 would be a direct encouragement to Bulgaria to stir up trouble by "mixing in the Macedonian question." Art[icle] No. 4 says nothing of guaranteeing the integrity of Bulgaria in the event of defeat by Turkey, while Art[icle] No. 5 would be a breach of neutrality on the part of Russia in the event of war between Turkey and Bulgaria.

C. H.

Turkey will distrust Russia more than ever and this will make things difficult for us, if the liberal régime and the regeneration of Turkey continue.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 709.

*Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.**Berlin, March 18, 1909.*

F.O. 10382/26/09/44A.

D. 8.25 A.M.

Tel. (No. 30.)

R. 10.30 A.M.

Emperor presided at a Council yesterday at which military measures which might eventually have to be taken were discussed.

Minister for Foreign Affairs thinks peace may still be preserved if Powers exercise strong pressure at Belgrade.⁽¹⁾

Servian Chargé d'Affaires called at Foreign Office today and stated that Servia could not cease interesting herself in the Bosnian question or disarm until annexation and other questions were settled by the Powers at a conference. He was very badly received. Turkish Ambassador who saw him afterwards told him the best way for the Servian Government to proceed would be to approach all the European Cabinets separately and ask their advice and then state that advice openly to the Skuptshina explaining that it was impossible for them to neglect unanimous voice of Europe.

This would enable them to disarm as the fact that they had followed the advice of Europe would act as a guarantee of their territorial integrity. Servian Chargé d'Affaires said he would telegraph to that effect to his Government but he feared that it would be too late.

Both French Ambassador and I have lost no opportunity of urging Minister for Foreign Affairs to give public expression to the desire of the German Government for a conference as mere statements that they find this or that proposal acceptable does not advance matters.

We have pointed out that immediate action seems necessary if peace is to be maintained.

⁽¹⁾ [v. Prince Bülow's telegram of March 18, 1909, to Herr von Tschirschky in Vienna, G.P. XXVI, II, p. 687.]

No. 710.

*Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.**Pera, March 18, 1909.*

F.O. 10411/26/09/44.

D. 12.35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 91.)

R. 12.20 P.M. [sic].

Grand Vizier says Servia has made an arrangement with Bulgaria by which latter will allow exportation through her territory of a certain amount of war material. This, H[is] E[xc]ellency thinks, is the preface to a more extensive arrangement or understanding of the details of which he hopes to become possessed.

Sent to Sofia.

No. 711.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 10320/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 18, 1909.

Tel. (No. 131.)

D. 1.15 P.M.

You should sound Baron d'Aehrenthal informally and unofficially respecting proposal as a whole in my telegram No. 330 to Sir A. Nicolson⁽¹⁾ which covers the point of disarmament. You can say to him that if such a procedure would in his opinion

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 695-6, No. 702.]

provide a solution I think there is a good prospect that all Powers would cooperate to bring it about and would succeed in getting Serbia to adopt it. You should point out however that a sudden and peremptory demand upon Serbia by Austria in the nature of an ultimatum might destroy this prospect and would certainly impair it.

No. 712.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 18, 1909.

F.O. 10480/26/09/44A.

D. 8.14 P.M.

Tel. (No. 154.)

R. 10.15 P.M.

Your telegram No. 330.⁽¹⁾

I communicated to Minister for Foreign Affairs to-day a Memorandum of your proposals. French Ambassador did so likewise, but his instructions had omitted the paragraph as to Serbia replacing her army on a normal peace footing. Instructions of my French colleague stated that it was a proposal made by you to the Austrian Ambassador in London.

I told M. Isvolsky that what you had said to the latter was an idea which you had in your mind as to what Serbia might have done, and was not a formal proposal.

M. Isvolsky said that he would study the Memorandum, to which at first sight he had no objection, though he doubted that it would have any result. He referred to the communication made a day or two ago by the German Ambassador here, and said that the "Fremdenblatt" had an article which made the same suggestion, and it would seem, therefore, as if German communication had been concerted with Vienna. He appeared to have some doubts whether proposed steps at Vienna might not clash with the German proposal, but I pointed out that the latter referred chiefly to the Austro-Turkish Protocol.

He told me that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand had informed Russian Military Attaché that now was the propitious moment for crushing Serbia. Military Attaché reported that the military preparations were almost complete.

M. Isvolsky was puzzled as to a telegram which he had received from Rome as to some suggestions of Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and asked if I had heard anything. I told him that I had seen a telegram from you to Rome, No. 111.⁽²⁾ in which you deprecated some declaration, but I was not sure to what it referred. I have not received Sir Rennell Rodd's telegram No. 42.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 695-6, No. 702.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced. Sir R. Rodd's Telegram No. 42 referred to a possible French proposal for joint representations to Vienna by England, France and Italy, with Germany if she would join but otherwise without her. Sir E. Grey's Telegram No. 111 deprecated such action at present.]

No. 713.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 18, 1909.

F.O. 10483/26/09/44.

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 81.)

R. 11 P.M.

Your telegram No. 131.⁽¹⁾

I have just seen Baron von Aehrenthal and carried out your instructions.

His Excellency expressed himself as most grateful to you for your efforts in helping to maintain peace. He has great hopes that step proposed by you⁽²⁾ will prove sufficient to bring about disarmament in Serbia, and told me that I could assure you that Austria-Hungary had no intentions whatever of attacking Serbia unless provoked beyond endurance. He pointed out that Austria-Hungary would require certain

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 700-1, No. 711.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 695-6, No. 702.]

guarantees that Servia would carry out the promise to disarm under a limit of time for this purpose, &c. (?).

He will at once consult the military authorities on these matters, and will give me a definite reply some time to-morrow.

Baron von Aehrenthal assured me that, now that he saw that real efforts were being made to solve Servian crisis, he, for his part, would precipitate nothing.

No. 714.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 10553/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 18, 1909.

Tel. (No. 351.)

D. 9 P.M.

Russian Chargé d'Affaires has communicated to me a tel[egram] containing the substance of the German proposal and the draft reply which M. Isvolsky submits for my views.⁽¹⁾

I cannot help noting that the reply is obscure since it contains no mention of a Conference to which reference is made in the earlier part of the telegram. It would seem to imply that the Bosnian question, as well as the Bulgarian and Montenegrin questions, could be settled by an exchange of notes and the Conference thus rendered superfluous which has always been the view of the Austrian Gov[ernment].

If the annexation of Bosnia were formally recognised by the Powers before the settlement of the Servian question the latter would probably assume an acute development, Austria having obtained from the Powers all that she requires.

In my opinion it would be desirable to obtain first a pacific settlement of the relations of Servia to Austria and to await the result of the steps which I have proposed in my tel[egram] to you No. 330⁽²⁾ should be taken at Vienna and Berlin and which, there is reason to believe, would if acceptable at Vienna meet with success at Belgrade. When this has been achieved I would, if M. Isvolsky desires it, be ready to agree to an exchange of notes provided that the modification of Article XXIX of the Treaty of Berlin in favour of Montenegro is included in it or accepted simultaneously.

I am not opposed in principle to the settlement of the modifications in the Berlin Treaty by an exchange of notes, but this method would in my opinion render a Conference hardly necessary.

From Sir F. Cartwright's tel[egram] No. 76⁽³⁾ which has been repeated to you it is clear that the German proposal is intended as a substitute for the Conference.

(1) [The German proposal was foreshadowed on March 14, and made on the 15th and 16th, *G.P.* XXVI, II, pp. 669-670, 672-676. The Russian draft reply is in *Siebert* (1921), pp. 255-256.]

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 695-6, No. 702.]

(3) [*v. supra*, p. 694, No. 700.]

No. 715.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10853/26/09/44A.

(No. 43.)

Vienna, D. March 18, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 22, 1909.

I have the honour to report that yesterday afternoon I saw Baron von Aehrenthal and discussed with him the present situation of affairs. He told me that the Servian reply to the Austro-Hungarian representations recently made by Count Forgach at Belgrade,⁽¹⁾ had caused the greatest disappointment in Vienna, and that he must consider this reply as a step backward instead of its being a step forward in the direction of the maintenance of peace. I asked His Excellency what was the exact point in the Note to which he took a special exception; he replied that it was scarcely worth while entering into a minute discussion of the verbal terms of the Note; what interested him was the

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 697-8, No. 706 (b).]

clear evidence in it that while Serbia pretended to desire to entertain good neighbourly relations with the Dual Monarchy, it was manifest that the Servian statesmen who were at present controlling the destinies of their country were determined to force their grievances upon the attention of Europe and to keep the Servian question open until Austria-Hungary was finally compelled to appear before a kind of European tribunal, there to stand in judgment for the presumed injuries she had inflicted upon her neighbour. Baron von Aehrenthal stated to me emphatically that Austria-Hungary would not go before any tribunal of this kind and have the Servian pretensions examined by it; her standpoint was clear: she admitted that she had done a technical wrong to Turkey in annexing Bosnia and Herzegovina without first having obtained the consent of the Porte to do so: this consent she had now obtained and she had notified this fact to the Powers. It seemed to him therefore that if they were really desirous of maintaining the peace of Europe they had only one course to pursue, namely, to recognize the Austro-Turkish Protocol without loss of time. By refusing to do so, or by attaching a variety of conditions to this recognition, they were opening the door to the introduction of all manner of dangerous possibilities into the present complex international situation. For him the Servian question was a thing quite by itself, it had no real connection with the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina; neither at the Berlin Conference nor subsequently had any Power held out any hope to Serbia that she should some day have her territories extended in the direction of Bosnia. He asked me whether there was any single Power at present prepared publicly to assert that Serbia was entitled to territorial compensation in the two annexed Provinces. To do so would be to declare that Turkey had not the right of ceding what was technically her own territory to Austria-Hungary without previously consulting Serbia. If this was the case what then became of the Servian grievances? Apparently the Powers reduced them to this, that Serbia did not possess as favourable a commercial Treaty with Austria-Hungary as might be desirable. Roumania was in the same condition, and yet one did not hear of Roumanian grievances as a European question; the reason was that the Roumanian Government conducted their business with their neighbours in a sensible way, whilst Serbia hoped to obtain unjustified advantages for herself by trying to draw Russia in to a conflict with Austria-Hungary. I asked Baron von Aehrenthal whether he considered the situation as hopeless; he replied that he did not but that the outlook was very bad. He had held out a friendly hand to the Servian Government in Count Forgach's Note; it was evident from the reply that Serbia did not wish to entertain any cordial relations with this country.

I then gave His Excellency a paraphrase in French of what in your opinion would seem to be a suitable reply by the Servian Government, as contained in your telegram No. 126 of the 16th instant.⁽²⁾ Baron von Aehrenthal read it carefully and then said that it was very good so far as it went but that it did not go quite far enough. The essential point which Austria-Hungary demanded at present was a clear proof that a change has taken place in the hostile spirit which has of late prevailed in Serbia against this country, and this proof must take the form of a cessation of armaments in the neighbouring Kingdom, followed by a clear intimation that this would be the first step to disarmament and a return to the normal state of things. In answer to my question whether events would now proceed with rapidity, His Excellency replied that he would continue to act with caution and to show much patience towards Serbia. He expected to reply to the Servian Note in a few days; he remarked that it would be somewhat sharp in tone but that it would have nothing of the character of an ultimatum; he would not press for an immediate reply to it but would give reasonable time to Serbia to meditate over its terms and form. In Baron von Aehrenthal's opinion the moment had now come when the representations of the European Powers at Belgrade might, by making Serbia understand the real situation of affairs, prevent the outbreak of a war which Austria-Hungary did not want and would only enter into reluctantly and with a heavy heart.⁽³⁾ I repeated to His

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 690, No. 697.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. M. Isvolski's report of this to the German Ambassador Count Pourtalès, G.P. XXVI, II, pp. 698-9.*]

Excellency that His Majesty's Government would support any representations made at Belgrade which had the approval of Russia. He said that everything now depended upon what Monsieur Isvolsky would do; that statesman had raised the storm by giving indirect encouragement to Servian pretensions which he had not now the moral courage to openly support. Baron von Aehrenthal, however, fully recognised how difficult Monsieur Isvolsky's position was in face of public opinion in Russia, but it seemed to him that it was his duty to clearly tell Servia what she could pretend to and what it was hopeless for her to expect to obtain.

Baron von Aehrenthal gave me the impression of being very calm and to have weighed all the possibilities of the situation, and he seemed to me to be determined to obtain with little delay precise assurances from Servia that in future she means to live at peace with Austria-Hungary, without which he will have to yield to the pressure of the military party and allow this country to go to war with Servia.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 716.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10854/26/09/44A.

(No. 44.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. March 18, 1909.

R. March 22, 1909.

I have the honour to report that I enquired yesterday of Baron von Aehrenthal what his views were with regard to the British reply to the Austro-Hungarian communication to you of the Austro-Turkish Protocol.⁽¹⁾ He replied that he was pleased with your congratulations at its completion, and that in principle he had no objections to raise to your suggestion that certain subjects, being ripe for discussion, should now go for final settlement before a Conference. He had always maintained that each question should be first exposed to thorough and direct examination by the Powers before it could be submitted to a Conference. In his opinion three questions relating to the present crisis had now reached that stage; they were, the Austro-Turkish Protocol, the Turco-Bulgarian Agreement, and the possible alterations in Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin. Every other point of the original Programme seemed to him to be very far from having reached a stage when it could be discussed at a Conference with any prospect of a satisfactory result. The question now was whether the best way of settling such points was by calling together a Conference or by the exchange of Notes between the Powers. Baron von Aehrenthal then informed me that he would delay replying to your communication respecting the Austro-Turkish Protocol until he had learnt the result of the steps which Prince Bülow was taking at St. Petersburg to obtain the consent of the Russian Government to recognise as finally settled by the exchange of direct Notes between the Powers those questions which no longer formed a real subject of dispute between them. Prince Bülow's proposal has the full support of Baron von Aehrenthal as it seems to him to be the most rapid way of reducing the number of disputable points now at issue between the Signatory Powers of the Berlin Congress. He appeared to show but little sympathy for the idea of holding a Conference but he did not show himself as absolutely opposed to it if the Programme were limited to certain points, so as to insure that the Conference would lead to practical results and not open the door to endless frictions and disputes.

I sounded His Excellency as to whether he would oppose a Conference whose Programme was at the start strictly limited to the registration of what were practically already settled questions but admitted the possible discussion of unspecified ones, provided that their discussion were allowed by the unanimous vote of the delegates. His Excellency said that he saw great objections to following such a course for

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 687, No. 692 and *note*.]

should the Servian pretensions be admitted as fit subjects for discussion, how could the delegates equitably refuse to take into consideration the Cretan question, which, he believed, Greece was very anxious to press upon the attention of the Powers, and if Austria-Hungary and Germany refused their consent to Servian pretensions being discussed, it might put them in open rupture with Russia which was not desirable in the interest of the maintenance of European peace.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 717.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

British Embassy, Vienna, March 18, 1909.

During the last few days a feeling of pessimism has been spreading through every class of society here and the military preparations which are being rapidly made do not conduce to increase the hope that peace may be maintained. The chief cause of this pessimism is due to this that people are beginning to be convinced that the Servian politicians are determined to drag out matters as long as possible, and this Austria-Hungary is resolved to put a stop to. The Servian crisis must come to an end rapidly for the cost to this country of keeping a considerable part of the army on a war-footing and doing nothing is too great to be borne much longer; the mercantile classes are also crying out that war is better than an armed peace which causes all business to stagnate. Baron von Aehrenthal, although he will do everything he can to avoid hostilities, is beginning to lose all hope of being able to maintain peace but he has assured me that he will do nothing precipitately and that the ultimatum, when it is finally decided to launch it, will take the form of two steps rather than one. Here they are thoroughly tired of the evasive language and want of straightforwardness of the Servian Government, and if peace is to be maintained Serbia will have to disarm very shortly, or at least to show a genuine intention of beginning to do so without loss of time. I recently enquired of Aehrenthal whether the military authorities here were really alarmed at the Servian military preparations; he replied that for a small country Serbia could dispose of a comparatively large number of men who had received some military training, and that therefore if they were capable of showing any fight they would give a great deal of trouble to the Austro-Hungarian army. Moreover, thoroughly organised bands were ready to be launched into Bosnia, and as we knew from our Boer war experiences, there was nothing more difficult to deal with than such bands of armed peasants. He said that already many deplorable incidents had occurred on and near the frontiér and the Austro-Hungarian Government had kept reports of these as much as possible out of the newspapers so as not to attract public attention to them; but he said that with the approaching spring these incidents would increase in number and with them public indignation against Serbia. I yesterday asked Baron von Aehrenthal how long he could drag out negotiations with Serbia before he launched the final ultimatum to that country; I said to him it was essential to gain time as the Powers were prepared to do their utmost to find a peaceful solution to the present difficulties, and that I felt sure that we would use all the pressure we possibly could at Belgrade to make Serbia understand that she had nothing to gain by risking a war with Austria-Hungary; but to bring this about required time, and if Austria-Hungary were to begin threatening too soon, the Servian politicians might get their backs up and decline to listen to the dictates of common sense. I therefore pressed him to tell me confidentially

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

when he thought the patience of Austria-Hungary would finally give way. He evidently did not wish to commit himself and replied to me in the words of the old French song: "entre Pâques et la Trinité."⁽²⁾

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽²⁾ [The omitted passages give details as to possible alterations in the Montenegrin frontier.]

No. 718.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 11205/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 19, 1909.

Tel. (No. 104.)

D. 6 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 90.⁽²⁾

Russian and French Gov[ernmen]ts have agreed to suggestion contained in my tel[egram] No. 330 to Sir A. Nicolson and I have invited the Italian Gov[ernmen]t to agree.

Inform German Gov[ernmen]t that we have reason to believe that this step will not be unfavourably received at Vienna and express hope that they will support.⁽²⁾

Repeated to Vienna, No. 140.

⁽¹⁾ [v. Sir E. Goschen's *pro memoria* to Herr von Schoen of March 20, 1909, *G.P.* XXVI, II, pp. 689-690.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, Telegram to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 330, repeated to Sir E. Goschen as No. 90, pp. 695-6, No. 702.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—An important letter from General Moltke of March 19, 1909, to General Conrad, received March 22, is in *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, Wien (1921), I, pp. 403-5, with his reply of April 10, pp. 405-6. A note as to military preparations and mobilisation by Austria-Hungary is given, *infra*, p. 761, No. 802, *Ed. note*, and v. *supra*, p. 693, *Ed. note*.]

No. 719.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 11205/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 19, 1909.

Tel. (No. 139.)

D. 7.5 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 131.⁽²⁾

Russian and French Gov[ernmen]ts have agreed to suggestion contained in my tel[egram] No. 330 to Sir A. Nicolson. We have invited the Italian Gov[ernmen]t to instruct their Ambassadors at Berlin and Vienna to cooperate with their British, French and Russian colleagues.

In the event of their acceptance the Ambassadors of the four Powers should individually inform Baron Aehrenthal that their Gov[ernmen]ts are prepared to advise Serbia to give the assurances as already explained, undertaking complete demobilization at once if Austria will give an assurance that Serbia will not be attacked if she demobilises and faithfully observes her promises. The Ambassadors should ask Baron d'Aehrenthal whether it would be satisfactory if they took action at Belgrade in this sense.

(Confidential.)

If there is least reason to suppose that this method of procedure will not be acceptable to Baron d'Aehrenthal you should inform us at once what method would be preferable.⁽³⁾

⁽¹⁾ [Repeated to Belgrade as No. 95. Telegrams in the same sense were sent to Berlin, Rome, Paris, St. Petersburg, v. *infra*, p. 710, No. 727.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 700-1, No. 711.]

⁽³⁾ [This final paragraph was entered on the original draft in Sir E. Grey's own hand, with the instruction "Add confidential." It is not clear whether it was repeated to Belgrade.]

No. 720.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 19, 1909.

F.O. 10628/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 83.)

R. 10 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

In presenting to me the draft of his suggested Servian Declaration, Baron von Aehrenthal made the following comments:—

Comments on paragraph 1:

Opening sentence reaffirms what Serbia has already stated in her Circular note to the Powers. The words "materially settled" are chosen as not implying a juridical or international (?) settlement, and are therefore not intended to mean that the ratification by the Powers of the Austro-Turkish Protocol is not necessary.

Comments on paragraph 2:

Baron von Aehrenthal laid great stress on necessity of getting reasonable assurances that the Servian Government would not encourage formation of bands on frontiers of the sanjak. He said that this point interested all Powers who desired peace in the Balkans, and he evidently feared that bands prepared for action in Bosnia might be turned against Turkish Macedonia.

Comments on paragraph 3:

This paragraph has been inserted on Baron d'Aehrenthal's personal recommendation, and is intended to show that Austria-Hungary does not wish in any way to humiliate Serbia or to interfere with the normal development of her defensive forces.

Baron von Aehrenthal gave me the most formal assurances that the Austro-Hungarian Government meditated no attack upon Serbia if she disarmed and that they had no intention of interfering with her independence, her free development, and the security of the integrity of her territory.

Count Mensdorff will be instructed to repeat to you these assurances.

Finally, Baron von Aehrenthal assured me that he would not complicate situation by addressing any new note for the present to Serbia. He would await events, and give you ample time to carry out your proposed action at Belgrade.

⁽¹⁾ [v. No. 721, immediately below. The telegram No. 82 was evidently delayed in transmission.]

No. 721.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10697/26/09/44A.

Vienna, D. March 19, 1909.

Tel. (No. 82.)

R. March 20, 1909.

Servia.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs has just communicated to me by order of the Emperor draft in French of the kind of Servian Declaration which would satisfy the Austro-Hungarian Government.

The text is as follows:—

Numéro 1. La Serbie reconnaît qu'elle n'a pas été atteinte dans ses droits par le fait accompli créé en Bosnie-Herzégovine. Elle déclare qu'ayant appris l'arrangement survenu à Constantinople entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et l'Empire

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 701-2, No. 713.]

Ottoman par (group omitted query, lequel) le nouvel état de choses se trouve matériellement réglé, elle abandonne l'attitude de protestation et aussi opposition qu'elle a observée à l'égard de l'annexion depuis l'automne dernier, et elle s'engage en outre à changer le cours de sa politique actuelle envers l'Autriche-Hongrie, pour vivre désormais avec cette dernière sur le pied d'un bon voisinage.

Numéro 2. Conformément à ses déclarations (group undecypherable) la Serbie ramènera son armée à l'état du printemps en 1908, en ce qui concerne son organisation, sa (?) dislocation, et son effectif. Elle désarmera et licenciera ses volontaires et ses bandes, et elle empêchera la formation de nouvelles unités irrégulières aux frontières de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de la Turquie.

Numéro 3. L'Autriche-Hongrie, loin de prétendre imposer des entraves au développement normal de l'armée Serbe, se borne à demander la révocation des mesures exceptionnelles qui contiennent une menace à son adresse.

No. 722.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 20, 1909.

F.O. 10773/26/09/44A.

D. 3.46 P.M.

Tel. (No. 160.)

R. 5 P.M.

Sir F. Bertie's telegram No. 43.

I told M. Isvolsky to-day that I wished to be quite clear as to whether he wished for a Conference or not. I did not allude in any way to the above-mentioned telegram. He replied that of course he desired a Conference, which he considered essentially necessary, and he looked upon German communication, which had been evidently combined with Austria, as an attempt to avoid a Conference. He had added to his proposed reply a sentence stating that an exchange of notes did not replace necessity of a Conference. He explained that he could not directly refuse German proposal without Russia again being exposed to the charge of being the obstacle to a pacific solution; and he had intimated his readiness to examine any Austrian proposal, but he trusted that it would also be submitted to the other Powers. He had objections to the course proposed by Austria and Germany, but he would prefer if objections came from some other Power than Russia.

Austria was undoubtedly making preparations for possible eventuality of a conflict with Russia, and it behoved the latter to be exceedingly careful to avoid giving any cause for it.

He was being continually pressed by German Ambassador here to give a reply to the German communication, and he could not delay sending in his reply, though up till now he had received no opinion on it from Paris.

No. 723.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 10784/26/09/44A.

Rome, D. March 20, 1909, 7.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 48.)

R. March 21, 1909, 8.0 A.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs promised to send instructions at once to Italian Ambassadors at Vienna and Berlin to cooperate with their French and Russian colleagues in the sense you have suggested.⁽¹⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 706, No. 719.]

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, March 20, 1909.

D. 7.20 P.M.

R. 10 P.M.

F.O. 10781/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 45.) Confidential.

Near East.

Your telegram No. 351 of last night to St. Petersburg.⁽¹⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs had not this afternoon received the text of German proposal, nor that of the Russian draft reply. I told him substance of German proposal gathered from Vienna telegram No. 76 of 17th March.⁽²⁾

His Excellency concurs in your view as to the desirability of settling Servian difficulty before formally recognizing conclusion of the other outstanding questions. He deprecates Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs' tergiversations, but if the Russian Government no longer desire a Conference French Government do not desire to insist on one being held, but he adheres to the opinion that peace in such circumstances will not be very durable.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 702, No. 714.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 694, No. 700.]

No. 725.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 10697/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 141.)

Foreign Office, March 20, 1909.

Your tel[egram]s Nos. 82 and 83.⁽¹⁾

I fear paragraph 1 of Austrian draft will give rise to difficulties both at Belgrade and with the Powers, which would have been completely avoided by my draft in tel[egram] 330 to Nicolson.⁽²⁾

It is too much to expect Serbia to say definitely that she has not been prejudiced by the annexation or to use language which might be construed as an apology for her attitude; and other Powers, who are parties to the Treaty of Berlin, can hardly be expected to advise Serbia to pronounce an opinion upon the annexation of Bosnia involving an alteration of the Treaty of Berlin before they have done so themselves.

What I hoped was that Baron d'Aehrenthal would be content with an assurance that Serbia would in good faith accept alterations of the Treaty of Berlin when duly recognized by the Powers and that she would now and for the future observe all the obligations of friendship. I hoped that it would not be insisted that she should say anything about the past; I recognized Baron d'Aehrenthal's objection to the word "continue" as implying that Serbia's present and past attitude was satisfactory, but it is difficult to force her to say definitely that it has been wrong.

I still hope that Baron d'Aehrenthal will accept my draft with the addition if he likes of his paragraphs 2 and 3 to which I see no objection. I hear now that my draft meets with the approval of other Powers, and it would be a great pity to spoil the prospects of unanimity, which seemed within reach after your unnumbered telegram of Thursday evening.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 707-8, Nos. 720-21.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 695-6, No. 702.]

Count de Bosdari to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11039/26/09/44.

My dear Sir Edward,

Italian Embassy, London, March 20, 1909.

I lost no time in telegraphing to my Government what Sir Charles Hardinge was good enough to tell me last night, concerning the steps which you propose to make at Belgrade and Vienna jointly with France and Russia, and the wish of the British Government to have Italy's adhesion to them. I trust a favourable answer will soon be returned to your request; but in the meantime I have to insist on Signor Tittoni's point of view relating to the summoning of a Conference.

He believes that this is quite urgent and the best, nay the unique, means of avoiding further trouble. In order to make it possible for a Conference to meet as early as it is desirable, it seems necessary to limit its subjects; and in fact it appears that only the three which have been pointed out by Signor Tittoni, viz., the Austro-Turkish Protocol the Russo-Turkish Agreement for Bulgaria and the alterations to art[icle] 29th of the Berlin Treaty are now in condition of being included in the programme.

The internal conditions of Turkey are still too unsettled to make it possible to consider now the questions of the capitulations of the foreign postal offices and the other ones raised in the agreement of London. As for Servia, after its explicit renunciation to territorial claims, its commercial relations with Austria are of course a special concern of those two countries, or must be left to settle to the international Commission of the Danube at which Servia would be specially represented. Nor would it seem expedient to mention in the forthcoming Conference the question of the railway from Danube to Adriatic, because Italy and Russia already possess a declaration to the effect that Austria-Hungary will not oppose its concession, and it would seem quite inexpedient to discuss again a settled point.

In conclusion only three points are ready or about to be so for the Conference, but they are the only three which it would seem desirable to bring before the Conference. Signor Tittoni hopes you will be able to share this opinion of his which, by the way, has already been accepted by Baron d'Aehrenthal.

Trusting you will be good enough to let me know if I can state that it is so.

I have, &c.

A. DE BOSDARI.

No. 727.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 11205/26/09/44.

(No. 113.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 20, 1909.

With ref[erence] to my tel[egram]s No. 124 to Sir R. Rodd, No. 104 to Sir E. Goschen, No. 200 to Sir F. Bertie, and No. 358 to Y[our] E[xcellency],⁽¹⁾ all of the 19th instant, I have to inform you that the Russian Chargé d'Affaires made to me to-day a communicat[io]n to the following effect:—

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t were ready to join in the step proposed to them by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] as described in my tel[egram] to Y[our] E[xcellency] No. 330.

A similar proposal was made at the same time by the French Ambassador at St. Petersburg but the question of disarmament was not included.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 706, No. 719 and note 1.]

Whilst agreeing to the text proposed by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment], the Russian Gov[ernment] was of opinion that it would be preferable that a preliminary step should be taken at Berlin alone in order to ensure in advance the co-operation of Germany, especially in view of the fact that the latter had just taken action with the object of finding a pacific solution of the crisis.

The Russian R[epresentative]s at Berlin, Vienna and Belgrade would receive instructions in conformity with the final decisions come to by the Cabinets of London and Paris.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY].

No. 728.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11797/26/09/44A.

(No. 181.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 20, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 29, 1909.

M. Iswolsky told me yesterday that he had, in a friendly and private manner, drawn a few days ago the attention of Count Berchtold to the reports that Austria-Hungary was taking steps to mobilize some Army Corps in Galicia. He had pointed out to His Excellency that Russia on her side was doing nothing of a similar nature and that the recent transfer to the Kieff district of some regiments was simply the recall of troops which had been sent to the Caucasus during the troubles in that region.

Count Berchtold, M. Iswolsky said, had been to see him later and had stated that by order of his Government he was authorized to formally assure him that no mobilization or other similar military measures had been taken in Galicia, and that his Government perfectly understood that the return of some troops to the Kieff district was a natural and normal proceeding.

M. Iswolsky had taken act of these assurances, and had expressed his thanks for them. He remarked to me that the assurances of the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador were at variance with the reports which were received both from the Russian Military Attaché at Vienna and from the Russian frontier officials; which all spoke of very active military measures in Galicia.

I did not think it necessary to inform M. Iswolsky of the information which H[is] M[ajesty's] Consul at Warsaw had telegraphed to me that all Austrian reservists in Poland who belonged to the Galician Army Corps had been ordered to rejoin their colours within 24 hours, as he doubtless will receive similar information and I do not wish to increase his doubts as to the veracity of the Austrian assurances.

I may add that a Polish friend of mine whose brother has large estates in Galicia, told me some two or three weeks ago, that he had received full details of the active military preparations which Austria-Hungary was making in Galicia, and that the opinion in that province was that Austria-Hungary would before long mobilize a large force on the Russian frontier.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 729.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11798/26/09/44A.

(No. 182.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 20, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 29, 1909.

As M. Pichon, according to Sir F. Bertie's telegram No. 43 of the 19th instant,⁽¹⁾ seems to consider that M. Iswolsky would not be unwilling if a Conference on Near

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

Eastern Affairs were not to take place, I asked M. Iswolsky this morning if he would kindly inform me whether an exchange of Notes as proposed by the German Government would, in his opinion, exclude the necessity of a Conference. M. Iswolsky replied that he regarded the German communication, which had evidently been carefully prepared beforehand with the Austro-Hungarian Government, as an attempt to render a Conference superfluous. This was by no means his desire: he considered that a Conference was essentially necessary, and he had, since he communicated his draft reply to London and Paris, added a sentence to it to the effect that it should be understood that an exchange by Notes would not supersede a Conference.

I had, he continued, communicated to him yesterday certain observations which had occurred to you in regard to his draft reply. He entirely concurred with the sense of your remarks, and he quite admitted that his draft reply was a little obscure. He had purposely made it so, as he did not wish to state fully his views until he was in possession of what Austria-Hungary would propose. He desired that I should understand that Russia was in a very different position either from France or from Great Britain. Both these latter countries could view all Near Eastern affairs from a very different standpoint than was possible in the case of Russia. Moreover there was, in the case of Russia, the contingency to be borne in mind that Austria might possibly in certain eventualities endeavour to force a conflict on her, and he did not doubt that I had noticed that both from Berlin and Vienna, in the press and elsewhere, there were continual assertions that Russia was the main obstacle to a pacific solution of the Austro-Servian difficulty. He was obliged, therefore, to be exceedingly cautious in the line which he adopted. He was well aware of the object which the German communication had in view, and he was alive to the objections which existed to an acquiescence by the Powers to a simple recognition of the annexation by an exchange of Notes. But if he had met the German communication by a *fin de non-recevoir*, Russia would have incurred the reproach of frustrating a friendly endeavour to preserve the peace. He had, therefore, felt bound to show a disposition to accept in principle the German proposals. He desired that when the Austrian Government sent their reply it should be communicated to all the Signatory Powers, and he would prefer that these or some of them would indicate the objections which existed against the procedure which the German Government had suggested, and which he regarded as likely, if adopted as it stood, to render useless the meeting of a Conference. This he considered would be a misfortune, as it was in his view essential that a Conference should meet to regularise the new situation which had been created, and to replace Article 25 by another article which would give international sanction to the new order of things as established by the annexation. He was anxious to send in his reply without any further delay as he was being daily pressed by the German Ambassador for an answer. He had received no intelligence from Paris as to the views of the French Government, which surprised him. I said that possibly the strike of the telegraph employés had disorganised the service.

M. Iswolsky said that he thought that the German proposals and the steps initiated by His Majesty's Government at Berlin and Vienna and which would be subsequently taken at Belgrade should be worked on parallel lines. I told His Excellency that the representations to be made at Belgrade were the most urgent; and that they should not wait upon the further developments of the German proposal. His Excellency agreed and said that he would at once despatch instructions to the Russian Representatives at Berlin, Vienna, and Rome to act in accordance with the wishes expressed in your telegram No. 358 of yesterday's date.⁽²⁾ At the same time he would point out to me that the Vienna Cabinet would, in all probability, wish to hasten on the formal recognition by the Powers of the Austro-Turkish protocol so that it could then present to the Servian Government a *fait accompli* and insist on their recognising it. This I said was possible, but the main point was to obtain the consent of Servia to a disarmament, as this was a very urgent matter, and we

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 706, No. 719, repeated to Sir A. Nicolson as Tel. No. 358.]

could not move at Belgrade on that point with any effect until we were assured that Baron d'Aehrenthal accepted the proposals put forward by His Majesty's Government and supported, it was to be hoped, by the other Powers.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 730.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

Pera, March 21, 1909.

F.O. 10774/26/09/44.

D. 12.20 P.M.

Tel. (No. 93.)

R. 12.45 P.M.

Turkish Government are considering question of advisability of coming to some arrangement with Austria as to a guarantee by latter of the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar, and Minister for Foreign Affairs sounded me as to whether it would be advisable.

I gave as my personal view that it was unnecessary and undesirable, as it would imply Austrian tutelage, would be distasteful to the Chauvinist Members of Parliament, and would be resented by Russia and Servia. Moreover, Austria would probably, without any arrangement, prevent any aggression on the sanjak, and an arrangement would give her special rights to interfere.

But I think Turkish Government would like to have your views.

No. 731.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, March 21, 1909.

F.O. 10779/26/09/44A.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 26.)

R. 7.30 P.M.

My Russian colleague called this morning and read me a telegram from his Government instructing him to consult with me as to the extent to which it would be possible, without compromising the success of the eventual joint action, to inform Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs confidentially that the Powers were exchanging views in the sense of proposal contained in your telegram No. 330 to St. Petersburg.⁽¹⁾

I agreed with Russian Minister that there could be no harm in our giving Minister for Foreign Affairs the text of your proposal for his very confidential information, especially as I had already told him the substance of it (see my telegram No. 23 of the 17th March,⁽²⁾ and we went to see him together.

After reading and taking a copy of your proposal, including clause respecting disarmament, Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs said that he thought it entirely acceptable, that he would do his utmost to support it, and that he had very little doubt that it would be accepted by his colleagues in the Cabinet. He said that Servian Government would prefer that these recommendations should simply be presented to them as the views of the Powers, of which they would take act, but on my pressing him directly he assured us that they would consent to make the proposed Declaration at Vienna if we collectively advised them to do so.

Russian Minister also carried out the instructions he had received in the same telegram to strongly advise Servian Government to abstain from all military measures at the present moment. Minister for Foreign Affairs promised him that Servia would "suspend all military action."

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 695-6, No. 702.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 694, No. 699.]

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 21, 1909.

F.O. 10783/26/09/44A.

D. 6.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 85.)

R. 9.45 P.M.

Servia.

Your telegram No. 141.⁽¹⁾

I have just seen Baron von Aehrenthal, and explained to him carefully the objections to paragraph I of his draft of the suggested Servian reply, text of which was transmitted in my telegram No. 82.⁽²⁾

In spite of all I could say, he declined to accept text proposed by you as satisfactory.⁽³⁾ Austrian point of view is as follows:—

It is not sufficient for Servia to give assurances that she will accept any alterations of the Treaty of Berlin approved of by the Powers, as this approval on the part of the Powers may yet be long delayed.

Austria requires some clear official guarantee that *from the present moment* Servia shall abandon all pretensions to the annexed provinces, and, moreover, shall give assurances of a change of policy towards Austria, and declare that she will in future entertain normal and good-neighbourly relations with this country. Baron von Aehrenthal said to me that if the Powers were prepared each individually and privately to inform him in writing that they would raise no objection to ratification of Austro-Turkish Protocol whenever it came before the Conference he would be inclined to accept a declaration on the part of Servia that she would recognize any alteration in the Treaty of Berlin approved by the Powers. Difficulty of finding a formula which would satisfy Austria as guaranteeing her sufficiently against Servian pretensions during time which may elapse before Austro-Turkish Protocol is finally ratified by the Powers would be greatly facilitated if the Conference were announced to meet at an early date.

At first Baron von Aehrenthal observed to me that paragraph I of his draft contained the minimum demands of Austria-Hungary, and therefore could not be altered. When I left him he seemed more disposed to think the matter over, and held out hopes that he might possibly alter wording of text so that there should be no allusion to Austro-Turkish Protocol. The absolutely necessary condition insisted upon by Austria was that Servia should give assurances without any loss of time, that “*dès à présent*” she desisted from all pretensions as to the two provinces. He laid special stress on this demand, and on French words just quoted. He added that he could not allow himself to be duped by unprecise Servian assurances. If the friendly declarations of the Servian Government were sincere, he did not see what objection there could be on their part to renounce definitely and at once all official aspirations to Bosnia.

Baron von Aehrenthal observed that, until a satisfactory declaration had been obtained from Servia, Austrian army could not be disbanded. Public opinion would not allow present uncertain situation to continue much longer. He said that he thought he could obtain by an ultimatum, possibly without it bringing on war, the declaration demanded, but he much preferred that it should be obtained by peaceful means through the mediation of the Powers.

Baron von Aehrenthal will try and see the Emperor to-day, and promises to receive me again to-morrow.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 709, No. 725.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 707–8, No. 721.]

⁽³⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 695–6, No. 702, and p. 709, No. 725.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11799/26/09/44A.

(No. 184.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 21, 1909.

R. March 29, 1909.

M. Iswolsky asked me to pay him a visit this morning, and shortly after my arrival Admiral Touchard also entered the room. M. Iswolsky said that he had some unpleasant news to communicate to us, though it came as no surprise to him. He prefaced his remarks by stating that, as we both knew, His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna had unofficially sounded Baron d'Aehrenthal as to what, for the sake of convenience, he would term Sir E. Grey's proposals. He understood that Baron d'Aehrenthal had given no unfriendly reception to these proposals, and His Majesty's Government had, therefore, been justified in assuming that when the four Ambassadors formulated the proposals in a more official manner they would be favourably entertained.

The Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Vienna now telegraphed that Sir F. Cartwright had received from Baron d'Aehrenthal the draft of a reply which the Servian Government should make to Austria-Hungary, and which was to be made spontaneously on their part. The Chargé d'Affaires said that the communication was made "soi-disant par l'ordre de l'Empereur," and he had added that Sir F. Cartwright had telegraphed the text to His Majesty's Government and would await their reply. Sir F. Cartwright had also stated, presumably to the Chargé d'Affaires, that if Russia were to take the initiative in pressing the Servian Government to make the declaration, a great step towards peace would have been taken. M. Iswolsky then read the text of the "projet de réponse." I asked if it were a reply which Serbia was to be urged to make or if it were the draft reply of Austria-Hungary to Serbia. His Excellency said that it was a reply which Serbia was spontaneously to make of her own supposed initiative, though he was puzzled at the last sentence, which referred to a declaration on the part of Austria-Hungary. He said that the Russian Chargé d'Affaires had added in his telegram that he had learnt from a good source that the demands formulated in the document were the minimum which Austria-Hungary would accept. M. Iswolsky then remarked that events were following exactly the course which he had predicted. As soon as the Vienna Cabinet received any proposals of a conciliatory character, its demands immediately increased; and if it could be supposed that the Powers were to recommend Serbia to make the declarations and if a Servian Government were to be found willing to make them, he was sure that Baron d'Aehrenthal would devise some higher demands and so *in crescendo*. He himself was firmly convinced, as he had frequently assured us, that Austria-Hungary had decided to employ hostile measures against Serbia, and that nothing which the Powers might say or do, or Serbia say or do, would avert the inevitable conflict. The proposals of Sir E. Grey had disappeared, and in their place had been substituted demands which it was extremely doubtful that any Servian Government could entertain. He was surprised at the suggestion that Russia should take the initiative in urging Serbia to make so complete and absolute a submission, and, as he put it, to hand Serbia over to Austria on a *plat d'argent*. He then analysed the draft reply, pointing out that in the first place Serbia was required to acknowledge the new state of things in the two provinces, before even the Signatory Powers had done so. Then she was to replace her army on the footing on which it was early in 1908 as to "organisation, distribution, and effective strength." He did not know what was meant by "organisation." Again she was required to disband "her volunteers and her bands." He was unaware that the Servian Government had any volunteers or bands under her control. Further she was not to permit the establishment of illegal units near the Austrian frontier. There was not a word as to Serbia receiving any assurance from Austria-Hungary that if she disarmed she would not be attacked or

injured. Serbia as we knew, was ready, M. Iswolsky remarked, to disarm if all the Powers asked her to do so, and she felt that she could then carry out this measure in safety under the guarantee of the Powers; but she would never do so at the request of Austria-Hungary alone.

M. Iswolsky said that he was ready to exhaust all efforts in order to preserve peace, but he feared that it was a hopeless task in view of the continually increasing demands of Austria. Every day some new situation was presented: and what were the four Ambassadors to do? Were they, in face of this fresh proposal from Baron d'Aehrenthal, to ask him to acquiesce in the steps which the four Powers were ready to take at Belgrade, if they were assured that Austria-Hungary considered them to be sufficient and satisfactory? It seemed to him that the fresh proposal from Baron d'Aehrenthal superseded the steps which were contemplated. He had been perfectly willing to join in the proposed steps although he was convinced that they would be fruitless, and would but encourage Austria to raise her demands. His forecast had been correct. He was anxious to ascertain what were the views of our respective Governments. He thought that it should be known which Power was the one who was threatening peace. It clearly was not Russia.

Both Admiral Touchard and myself said that we could give no information, as we had none to give; and we both expressed our opinion that the demands of Austria-Hungary, if persisted in, were not likely to facilitate a peaceful solution.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 734.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11800/26/09/44A.

(No. 185.) Secret.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 21, 1909.

R. March 29, 1909.

I have had the honour to receive the telegrams which you were good enough to repeat to me from Sir G. Lowther⁽¹⁾ and Sir G. Buchanan⁽²⁾ relative to an alleged secret agreement between Prince Ferdinand and the Russian Government. I would much like to be able to obtain some confirmation or otherwise of the agreement, but it would be useless, and might create suspicion to sound M. Iswolsky on the subject. He informed me on a previous occasion that nothing of any interest passed in the two interviews which he had with His Royal Highness and he would naturally repeat this statement were I again to allude to the matter. It is, of course, possible that Prince Ferdinand talked over the matter with the Emperor, of whom he had certainly two audiences; but it would be impossible for me to ascertain anything at all trustworthy of what passed on those occasions.

The fact of the agreement being, as Sir G. Buchanan justly remarks, so much in favour of Bulgaria would, to my mind, give some colour to the presumption that the main conditions may be authentic. It is undoubted that M. Iswolsky is anxious to detach Bulgaria from any Austrian leanings, and he told me the other day with evident satisfaction that Baron d'Aehrenthal had excused himself from receiving Prince Ferdinand during the return journey of the latter through Vienna. The keen desire of M. Iswolsky during the recent negotiations with Rifaat Pasha to drag in some recognition of Bulgarian independence might also be taken as indicating some engagement towards Bulgaria on the subject.

I asked M. Iswolsky to-day what attitude Bulgaria would adopt in the event of a conflict between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, and he replied that the utmost that could be expected was that she would remain neutral. I enquired if he were confident that Bulgaria might not be disposed to side with Serbia. This contingency

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 699, No. 708.]

⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]

he at once excluded, and remarked that were Bulgaria to support Serbia, she would in all probability find Roumania against her, and he still believed that there was some convention between that country and Austro-Hungary.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 735.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 22, 1909.

F.O. 11065/26/09/44A.

D. 2.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 86.)

R. 3.45 P.M.

After my long interview with Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] yesterday⁽¹⁾ I think that I can summarise the Austrian view of the present situation as follows.

Servia having declared that she is ready to accept decision of the Powers, the Servian question can be solved at once, without any humiliation to Servia, by the Powers recognising the Austro-Turkish agreement without loss of time. Until the Powers do so the Servian Gov[ernment] can if necessary continue officially to declare that the Bosnian question is still open. Delay by the Powers in recognising the Austro-Turkish agreement causes the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] to suspect that some unfriendly feeling is harboured by them against this country. Therefore Austria-Hungary must make sure that, in the assurances which Powers propose to obtain from Servia, it shall be clearly laid down that the latter abandons all claim to Bosnian territory. Without receiving such assurances Austria-Hungary cannot disband her army, as the whole Servian question remains open until such indefinite period when the Conference may settle it for good. Austria-Hungary cannot allow the present unsatisfactory situation to continue much longer, and if Powers show themselves incapable of settling it promptly, she will have to do so herself by means of an ultimatum.

Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] showed considerable anxiety as to a sudden change of Ministry at Belgrade which might bring about a repudiation by the new Servian Gov[ernment] of engagements entered into by their predecessors. This fear makes it all the more necessary for him to obtain without loss of time a clear Declaration from Servia that she officially abandons for good her pretensions to Bosnia.

MINUTES.

If necessary, I do not see why the Powers should not inform Baron v. Aehrenthal privately that they will not raise objection to the ratification of the Austro-Turkish Protocol.

L. M.

The difficulty in doing so is that we do not yet know the views of M. Isvolsky as to whether he wishes the three questions of Bulgaria, Bosnia and Montenegro to be settled by an exchange of notes or by a Conference. The first alternative is, to my mind, greatly preferable at the present moment and by far the simplest method.

When we present our new draft note to B[aron] Aehrenthal I think we might say that we will push on at once a complete settlement of the three pending questions, whether by an exchange of notes or by a Conference, whichever course the Powers desire. In any case we cannot settle the Bosnian question without obtaining the abolition of the restrictions upon Montenegro contained in Art[icle] 29 of the Berlin Treaty.

C. H.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 714, No. 732.]

No. 736.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 22, 1909.

F.O. 11068/26/09/44A.

D. 3.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 87.)

R. 5.15 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 85.⁽¹⁾

Baron von Aehrenthal after seeing the Emperor has just written to me a private letter in which he makes (group omitted ? proposals) which he hopes will be accepted by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] as reasonable.

If the Powers will give him written assurance that they will raise no opposition to Austro-Turkish protocol whenever it goes before Conference he will be satisfied with a formula containing a Declaration from the Servian Government that she will accept alteration in Article 25 of Treaty of Berlin which may be made by the Powers in Conference.

This Declaration may be made to the Powers but must be made also directly to Austria-Hungary.

I will forward to you in my next tel[egram] draft text in French proposed by Aehrenthal of two formulas which he hopes will serve as a basis for final form of the two above-mentioned Declarations.

I will communicate above to my French Italian and Russian colleagues for the confidential information of their Gov[ernmen]ts.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 714, No. 732.]

No. 737.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

Vienna, March 22, 1909.

F.O. 11072/26/09/44A.

D. 5.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 88.)

R. 6.30 P.M.

Servia.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽²⁾

Following is text in French of the two documents mentioned (? by Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs):—

Following is Declaration to be made by Servia:—

“La Serbie reconnaît qu'elle n'a pas été atteinte dans ses droits par le fait accompli créé en Bosnie-Herzégovine et qu'elle se conformera par conséquent à telle décision que les Puissances prendront par rapport à l'Article 25 du Traité de Berlin. Se rendant aux conseils des Grandes Puissances, la Serbie s'engage dès à présent à abandonner l'attitude de protestation et d'opposition qu'elle a observé à l'égard de l'annexion depuis l'automne dernier et s'engage en outre à changer le cours de sa politique actuelle envers l'Autriche-Hongrie pour vivre désormais avec cette dernière sur le pied d'un bon voisinage.

“Conformément à ses déclarations pacifiques, la Serbie ramènera son armée à l'état du printemps de 1908, en ce qui concerne son organisation, sa dislocation et son effectif. Elle désarmera et licenciera ses volontaires et ses bandes, et elle empêchera la formation de nouvelles unités irrégulières aux frontières de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de la Turquie.”

(1) [Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 385, Paris, No. 216, and Rome, No. 140, all of March 24, 1909.]

(2) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

Following is text of Declaration to be signed by Powers :—

“L’Autriche-Hongrie a communiqué aux Cabinets le Protocole signé à Constantinople le 26 février dernier et dans lequel la Turquie reconnaît le nouvel état de choses créé en Bosnie-Herzégovine par la Proclamation de Sa Majesté Impériale et Royale en date du 5 octobre, 1908. Les Puissances signataires du Traité de Berlin prennent, conformément aux principes énoncés à la Conférence de Londres de 1871, acte de cette communication et déclarent aboli l’Article 25 du Traité de Berlin.”

No. 738.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 22, 1909.

F.O. 11073/26/09/44A.

D. 6.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 89.)

R. 7.30 P.M.

My telegram No. 88.⁽¹⁾

Second text, as far as I understand Baron von Aehrenthal’s letter to me, is not intended as the text of assurances which are to be made individually by each Power to Austria, but as the formula to be eventually adopted at the Conference by the Powers, and (? group omitted: to) which each Power individually will from now assure Austria that she will give her support at the Conference.

(¹) [*v. immediately preceding document.*]

No. 739.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 10783/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 22, 1909.

Tel. (No. 146.)

D. 10.45 P.M.

I am much disappointed that Baron d’Aehrenthal did not accept my first draft. It would have secured assurances from Servia satisfactory in substance, irreproachable in form and free from all irritating expressions. Baron d’Aehrenthal’s draft expects something like an apology which is directly humiliating to Servia and a recognition by Servia of Austro-Turkish Protocol in advance of the Powers which is indirectly humiliating to them, especially to Russia.

I send another draft founded on Baron d’Aehrenthal’s, it secures all that his draft secures, but without humiliation to other Powers or to Servia. It is however the utmost that other Powers can be asked or expected to advise at Belgrade; it may even be difficult to get it adopted there, but if Baron d’Aehrenthal accepts it I believe that the Servian difficulty may be disposed of in a few days and the main questions settled by exchange of notes or conference as Powers may prefer in a very short time.⁽²⁾

If Austria cannot accept this the responsibility for disappointing all these hopes must be with her. We shall have done all we can our part will be finished and if peace is sacrificed we shall have no course but to justify to Parliament here the part we have played by explaining what we have done to secure peace and how it came to fail.

Following is the text of the draft note which you should submit to Ba[ro]n d’Aehrenthal :—

“La Serbie ne possédant pas de droits légaux sur les provinces annexées de Bosnie et de l’Herzégovine, le Gouvernement Serbe, sur l’invitation des Puis-

(¹) [Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 378, Berlin, No. 112, Paris, No. 211, Rome, No. 135, Belgrade, No. 100, and Constantinople, No. 200, all of March 23, 1909.]

(²) [*v. Count Metternich’s report of Sir Edward Grey’s views on this point on March 22, G.P. XXVI, II, p. 701.*]

sances, déclare reconnaître et accepter formellement toute modification apportée au Traité de Berlin soit par un fait accompli, soit par suite d'un accord matériel intervenu entre l'Autriche-Hongrie et la Turquie, soit d'une autre façon, qui pourra obtenir l'assentiment des Puissances Signataires du dit Traité.

"Le Gouvernement Serbe donne des assurances formelles au Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois qu'il ne prendra pas à son égard de mesures malveillantes lesquelles, soit directement soit indirectement, puissent créer des difficultés ou de désordres en Autriche-Hongrie et en Bosnie-Herzégovine, et que, tout en sauvegardant l'indépendance et l'intégrité du Royaume Serbe, il observera dès à présent et désormais toutes les obligations d'amitié et de bon voisinage qui devraient gouverner les relations existant entre deux Etats amis et limitrophes.

"Se fiant aux assurances formelles du Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois de ne former aucun projet d'agression contre la Serbie et de ne prétendre ni porter atteinte à l'indépendance, à l'intégrité et à la libre évolution de celle-ci ni imposer d'entraves au développement régulier de l'armée serbe, le Gouvernement Serbe, donnant suite à la demande des Puissances, s'engage à ramener dès à présent l'armée serbe à son état normal en temps de paix—c'est à dire, d'il y a un an,—et à révoquer les mesures exceptionnelles qu'il a prises dernièrement. Le Gouvernement Serbe, en outre, désarmera les bandes irrégulières et empêchera la formation de nouvelles unités semblables sur les frontières de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de la Turquie.

"Le Gouvernement Serbe, ayant la certitude que ces assurances amicales rencontreront un esprit de réciprocité auprès du Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois s'empresse de profiter de l'offre qui lui a été faite par ce dernier d'entamer des négociations directes en vue de la conclusion d'un traité de commerce et il est prêt à entrer dès à présent en pourparlers à cet effet."

No. 740.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 10774/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 22, 1909.

Tel. (No. 199.)

D. 11 P.M.

Y[ou]r tel[egram] No. 93.⁽¹⁾

I approve your language to the Grand Vizier. Such an arrangement would, moreover, at the present moment introduce a further element of discord and retard the general settlement.

You may if you think it necessary inform the Grand Vizier unofficially of my views.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 713, No. 730.]

No. 741.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 11068/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 22, 1909.

Tel. (No. 147.)

D. 11 P.M.

I have not yet received text of declarations but I think it would be preferable not to complicate matters by raising point of written declaration from the Powers: in any case such a declaration would be objected to without a corresponding declaration from Austria that she will remove the restrictions placed upon Montenegro by Art[icle] 29. Italy for instance has always regarded this altering of Art[icle] 29 and the Bosnian question as inseparable.

⁽¹⁾ [Repeated to Cetinje as No. 14 of March 30, 1909. Also to Berlin, Paris, Rome, Belgrade, Constantinople, and St. Petersburg on March 23.]

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11773/26/09/44A.
(No. 97A.) Confidential.
Sir,

Berlin, D. March 22, 1909.
R. March 29, 1909.

I have the honour to report that Herr Kiderlen-Waechter came to see me this evening and made a communication to the following effect. He said that the idea of the German Government was that the chief fault committed by Servia in her communications to Austria-Hungary was that she had always put forward the fact that the annexation had not been sanctioned by the Powers as a pretext for refusing to renounce her pretensions. In order to remedy this state of affairs and to render the action of the Powers at Belgrade easier and more effectual, the German Government thought that the sanction of the annexation might now be arranged by an exchange of notes. With a view to showing their conciliatory spirit they had accordingly addressed to the Power chiefly interested, viz., Russia a communication to the following effect: "No Power has any desire to revert to the *status quo ante* in the Bosnian and Bulgarian questions. Are the Russian Government willing to consent by note to the abolition of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin? In the case of an affirmative answer the German Government are ready to use their influence at Vienna to persuade Baron Aehrenthal to address a note to the Powers, asking them, with reference to his note communicating the Austro-Turkish Protocol, for their sanction to the annexation. The same procedure could then be adopted in the Bulgarian Independence Question, in which perhaps M. Isvolsky would be disposed to take the initiative. If the Russian Government agrees with these views the German Government is ready to make the necessary communication to the other Powers. It would however be quite open to the Russian Government to make this communication themselves either alone or with Germany." (1)

The Minister of Foreign Affairs asked that this communication might be regarded as confidential, as he was not aware whether the Russian Government had asked your advice on the subject.

I was also at the moment ignorant as to whether any communication had passed between you and M. Isvolsky on the subject; I therefore proceeded to draft a telegram to you giving the text of the German communication. Before sending it off, however, I received the repetition of a telegram addressed to you by His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris, (2) from which it was clear that the German proposal had already been communicated to you.

I made no comment upon the proposal in conversation with Herr Kiderlen. He however made a few remarks on the subject. He said that the fact that they had made it after their former proposal had been ruined by M. Isvolsky's independent and most ill-considered action at Belgrade, was a clear proof of the sincere desire of the German Government to do everything in their power to bring about a peaceful solution of the present difficulty. Their proposal had now been in M. Isvolsky's hands for a week or more, and all they had received, in spite of repeated requests on the part of the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg, was an evasive answer which was no answer at all. He said that this was somewhat ominous, but that he still had hopes of a favourable answer. A great deal depended on the Governments of Great Britain and France. If they had sufficient influence to persuade the Russian Government to accept the German proposal, the Russian Government had certainly sufficient influence at Belgrade to induce Servia to recognize the annexation and renounce her pretensions.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

(1) [*cp. supra*, p. 694, No. 700.]

(2) [*c. supra*, p. 709, No. 724.]

No. 743.

*Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.*Tel. (Private.)(¹)

Vienna, March 23, 1909.

Baron von Aehrenthal has privately told me that he is convinced the best intentioned advice given by the mediating Powers at Belgrade will be without result unless it is accompanied by a categorical declaration by them to the effect that if Serbia refuses to conform to this advice the Powers will then abandon her to her fate.

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

No. 744.

*Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.*Tel. (Private.)(¹)

March 23, 1909, 5.25 P.M.

Your private telegram first essential is that Baron d'Aehrenthal should agree to a note which the Powers can advise Serbia to send. If she then refused I imagine that Powers would give her the intimation which he thinks would be necessary, but which I do not believe would be required for draft such as I have suggested.(²)

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 719-20, No. 739.]

No. 745.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 23, 1909.

F.O. 11196/26/09/44A.

D. 7.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 93.) Confidential.

R. 9 P.M.

My telegram No. 91.(¹)

From what Baron d'Aehrenthal has just told me I fear that it is impossible to expect that Austro-Hungarian Government will make any but verbal alterations in the text of assurances to be obtained from Serbia, sent to you in my telegram No. 88.(²)

This text was drawn up with the greatest care and forethought, and contains the minimum assurances which Austria-Hungary must have before she can begin to demobilize her army. These assurances Austria will be glad to obtain through the mediation of the Powers. If this mediation fails she must with regret obtain them in other ways. The situation cannot be allowed to continue in its present unsettled state.

Baron d'Aehrenthal expressed the earnest hope that His Majesty's Government would carefully consider the new Austrian text before finally rejecting it, and as situation will be greatly aggravated if the mediation of the Powers at Belgrade should fail, I will await an answer to this telegram before taking action on any instructions which may reach me in the interval.

Servian Minister has just called to sound me as to the assurances which Austria-Hungary was likely to demand from Serbia.

On my telling him that it was impossible for the moment to give an account of the negotiations, he volunteered the statement that the Servian Government would accept almost any formula proposed.

(¹) [*v. infra*, p. 723, No. 747.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 718-9, No. 737.]

No. 746.

Sir P. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 23, 1909.

F.O. 11197/26/09/44A.

D. 7.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 94.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Montenegro.

Your telegram No. 147.⁽¹⁾

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me Italian Ambassador sounded him yesterday as to whether Austria-Hungary would be prepared to approve alterations in Article 29.

He had replied Austria-Hungary was quite prepared to renounce advantages secured to Austria-Hungary by that Article, but that international questions involved must be settled by common assent of the Powers.

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 720, No. 741.]

No. 747.

Sir P. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 23, 1909.

F.O. 11199/26/09/44A.

D. 7.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 91.)⁽¹⁾

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 146.⁽²⁾

Although text contained in your above-mentioned telegram must have been sent off before my telegram No. 88⁽³⁾ reached you, I showed it privately to Baron d'Aehrenthal to save time and to elicit any comments he might have to make.

After reading it carefully His Excellency declared that it was inadmissible. His chief objections were:—

In paragraph 2 the words “unfriendly measures,” etc. What Austria-Hungary demands is a clear declaration that Serbia will change her hostile policy which she has been pursuing since last October. Your text, his Excellency maintains, allows Serbia to continue to assert that she had armed simply for defensive purposes.

Wording of paragraph 3, according to Baron d'Aehrenthal, opens the door to the supposition that the Powers will exercise in future a kind of protectorate over Serbia. This he cannot admit. The words “neither threaten the independence, the integrity, and the free evolution,” according to his Excellency, are highly objectionable, as Austria has never shown any inclination to threaten independence of Servia; and free evolution might be interpreted to imply reserved rights as to Bosnia in the future.

(1) [This telegram was received unnumbered but was marked No. 91 in the Foreign Office and is so described in the reply to it, *v. infra*, p. 731, No. 758.]

(2) [*v. supra*, pp. 719–20, No. 739, D. March 22, 10.45 P.M.]

(3) [*v. supra*, pp. 718–9, No. 737. Though this was received in the Foreign Office at 6.30 P.M. on March 22, it cannot be held certain that Sir Edward Grey had actually seen it before sending No. 739.]

No. 748.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 23, 1909.

D. 7.51 P.M.

Tel. (Private.)⁽¹⁾

R. 9.15 P.M.

M. Isvolsky was in great alarm this afternoon and I think some threats must have been made to him by German Ambassador of which he did not tell me.⁽²⁾ His

(1) [Grey MSS. (Russia), Vol. 34.]

(2) [*v. infra*, pp. 727–9, No. 753.]

surrender to the German demand, which was peremptory, is so complete and sudden that I feel sure he has been rudely shaken. He will I think cede all along the line if it is thought necessary to ask him to do so. He has asked me to see him again to-night after he has seen Emperor and German Ambassador. He may then possibly confide in me, but I doubt it.

No. 749.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 23, 1909.

F.O. 11193/26/09/44A.

D. 7.59 P.M.

Tel. (No. 166.)

R. 9 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs asked me what news I had to give him from London as to your views. I said I had none to give. He said he could give me some, and he read me the texts of the two Declarations proposed by Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs⁽¹⁾ and a telegram from Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London, as well as text of formula which you would propose to Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs as a kind of counter-project to the draft Declaration of latter.⁽²⁾ I said that I would like to know his opinion as to your proposed formula.

He said he did not like it at all, as it went even farther than what Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs had asked, as it said that, if by accomplished fact or by an arrangement between Austria-Hungary and Turkey, &c., a modification were introduced, Russian Government should accept latter. He did not agree with the thesis enunciated, but, as it would have been dispatched to Vienna to-day, there was nothing more to be said. I told him I could not discuss question, as I was not in possession of your views. I was, I said, confused by parallel negotiations between Berlin and St. Petersburg and between Vienna and London on what was practically the same subject. He said that Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs was brow-beating Europe, but that, in the circumstances, peace must be preserved.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 718-9, No. 737.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 719-20, No. 739.]

No. 750.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 11072/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 23, 1909.

Tel. (No. 151.)

D. 10 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 88.⁽¹⁾

The new form of declaration to be made by Servia presents some of the same objections as the original text, although reference to the Austro-Turkish protocol has been omitted. I maintain my proposal, contained in my tel[egram] No. 146 to you of yesterday,⁽²⁾ as offering the only possible solution granting all that B[ar]on d'Aehrenthal demands both in substance and form without inflicting unnecessary humiliation upon Servia.

As regards the text of the declaration to be signed by the Powers the objections to it are contained in my tel[egram] No. 146.

(It might however be possible to obtain the assent of the Powers to the eventual adoption at the Conference of the proposed declaration provided that the modification

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 718-9, No. 737.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 719-20, No. 739.]

of Art[icle] 29 is included in it and that the Servian crisis is peaceably settled by the intervention of the Powers which is now in progress.)⁽³⁾

MINUTE.

I should have thought Russia would have stipulated for recognition of Bulgarian Independence *pari passu* for Germany and Austria have hinted once that they might be nasty about payments for the railway but we can leave it to Russia to raise this point.

E. G.

⁽³⁾ [The paragraph in round brackets was substituted by Sir C. Hardinge for his original draft after conversation with M. Cambon. The original version ran "It has moreover no direct connection with the present Austro-Servian crisis." Sir C. Hardinge adds "M. Cambon thinks Russia would agree to this and so do I."]

No. 751.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11477/26/09/44A.

(No. 101.)

Berlin, D. March 23, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 26, 1909.

A Berlin telegram published recently in the "Kölnische Zeitung" gives an account, from the German point of view of the negotiations now being carried on by the European Powers with a view to obtaining a peaceful solution of the difficulties between Austria and Servia.

It states that the first mediatory action planned by the Powers was to bring pressure to bear on Servia by collective representations at Belgrade, that however this plan had been ruined because Russia had taken upon herself, without waiting for the other Powers, to make representations at Belgrade alone. Russia's step had completely failed either because her influence at Belgrade was too weak, or because it had not been exercised with sufficient energy. In any case the result had been that no progress had been made. At the present moment England, France and Italy were trying their hand and were endeavouring to find a formula which, while satisfying Austria, would bring the necessary pressure to bear upon Servia. Germany, who had been willing to join in the collective action at Belgrade, and had even taken a prominent part in planning it, had, since its failure in consequence of M. Isvolsky's independent action, withdrawn into the background and was leaving negotiations with Servia to other Powers. In taking this course she was probably right, as any German advice given at Belgrade would be probably regarded with suspicion by the Servian Government.⁽¹⁾

The telegram then mentions the Italian proposal for a Conference, saying that this proposal was considered in Austria to be practicable, but that it had apparently not met with the approval of other Powers.

As regards this point, I may mention that Germany might be included amongst the "other Powers" as M. Tittoni's proposal has not met with much support here, as the German Government consider an exchange of notes a simpler and a safer proceeding, and have, as you are aware made a proposal in that sense to the Russian Government.

The telegram then proceeds as follows: "The attitude of Germany with regard to a Conference is well known. She has no rooted antipathy to a Conference; on the contrary she is disposed to welcome any means which afford a safe egress from the present complicated situation. But she does wish to draw general attention to her contention that a conference, like everything else, has two sides, and that it is by no means the all-curing remedy which in some quarters it is represented to be.

⁽¹⁾ [Marginal comment by Sir C. Hardinge: "This supplies quite a good reply to the German Gov[ernment] if they complain."]

It is only necessary to realize how difficult it is for the Powers to come to an agreement over such a simple matter as making really pacific and effective representations at Belgrade, to understand our justifiable anxiety lest the required harmony at a Conference should fail to be preserved, and lest a grouping of the Powers taking part in it should ensue, which would render the word 'harmony' completely illusory. Such an eventuality would be very far from causing any improvement in the situation. However, whatever takes place, be it a Conference or be it an exchange of notes, the Powers have in any case no time to lose, as matters have come to such a pass that hesitations, shufflings, and word-splitting must cease if peace is to be preserved. A situation like the one before us, which is in itself clear, can only be solved by clear and straightforward and at the same time resolute, action.

"One thing, however, becomes daily more apparent, namely that if war breaks out at all, it will be localised."

The pen that wrote the telegram may be that of the Berlin correspondent of the *Kölnische Zeitung*, but the hand that guided it is evidently that of Herr Kiderlen, as its language corresponds almost word for word with what he has said at various times both to me and my French colleague. He has certainly more than once stated that his objection to a Conference was founded on the fear that the Powers would group themselves, and in a manner numerically unfavourable to Austria-Hungary and Germany.

I have, &c.

W. E. GOSCHEN.

No. 752.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11802/26/09/44A.

(No. 188.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 23, 1909.

R. March 29, 1909.

Sir F. Bertie, in his tel[egram] No. 45 of the 20th instant.⁽¹⁾ intimated that M. Pichon complained of the tergiversations of M. Iswolsky, and that the latter was unwilling that a Conference should be held. In regard to the latter point I have in another despatch explained that M. Iswolsky is of opinion, and has been always of opinion, that a Conference is essentially necessary. With respect to the tergiversations of M. Iswolsky I would beg leave to point out that he is in an exceedingly difficult position, and that the circumstances of the present time compel him to adopt a line of policy which, were conditions other than they are, would in all probability, not have been followed by him.

It must be admitted that Russia is not in a position to act with that energy and decision which the grave interests at stake would seem to demand. She sees before her, and M. Iswolsky has more than once recognised the fact in conversation with me, two powerful adversaries acting in close harmony towards a common object, which is to establish Austrian and indirectly German influence firmly in the Balkan Peninsula. To achieve this end both Powers are ready to adopt all means, whether diplomatic or forcible. Russia is well aware that when this aim is gained, her position among the Balkan Slavs will be rudely shaken, if not permanently destroyed. M. Iswolsky has endeavoured to postpone this eventuality by all possible means, and to lessen its consequences by endeavouring to win over Bulgaria to the side of Russia, and to encourage the Balkan States to confederate between themselves and to enter into close relations with Turkey. Events have moved more swiftly than he anticipated, and the determination of his adversaries has been more pronounced than he had foreseen. The Servian question which has assumed so acute a form has been a cause of

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 709, No. 724.]

great anxiety to M. Iswolsky, as he does not conceal from himself that whether by force of arms or diplomatic pressure there is every possibility that Servia will be compelled to make complete submission to Austria-Hungary. Had Russia been stronger at this moment, and had she been able to rely with more confidence than is actually the case on material support from her ally France, she would, I am disposed to believe, have adopted a firmer attitude and employed sterner language. She has been forced to temporize and to compromise. It has been a great disappointment to M. Iswolsky to have had brought home to him that the French Government have not shown the same solidarity of views and of action with Russia as has been so clearly and unmistakably manifested in the relations between Germany and Austria-Hungary. Russia has no reason for trusting to the co-operation of France were she disposed to push matters to extremities. As regards England, M. Iswolsky is the first to readily acknowledge the cordial and loyal diplomatic support which His Majesty's Government have unswervingly accorded to him. But he is well aware that the assistance of His Majesty's Government cannot proceed further than diplomatic support. He therefore, for all practical purposes finds that Russia is isolated, and it would be the extreme of folly for him to imagine that Russia would alone meet with any hope of success the powerful combination presented by her Western neighbours. Had Russia to deal with Austria-Hungary alone she could have faced with equanimity a rupture with her; but as Germany would range herself on the side of her ally, and as the attitude of the ally of Russia would be doubtful, the latter was clearly in the weaker position.

There is one point, I submit, which should not be lost sight of and that is that when the present situation has calmed down, and Austria-Hungary has gained all that she sought, I am afraid that Russia will take stock of her political relations, and will enquire whether the combination with which she connected herself was of any real advantage to her: and whether it might not be wiser for her to listen to the advice so persistently given to her from Berlin and alter entirely the course on which she has recently been navigating.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 753.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 11803/26/09/44A.

(No. 189.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 23, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 29, 1909.

M. Iswolsky asked me to call on him this afternoon. I found him agitated. He said that he had a great deal to communicate to me, but had I anything to tell him? I replied in the negative. He said he would first begin with a peremptory "mise en demeure" which he had received yesterday afternoon from the German Ambassador. It was to the effect that the German Government found his reply to their last communication not sufficiently clear: and that they, therefore, requested to know precisely from the Russian Government whether, if Austria-Hungary sounded the Powers as to accepting the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, Russia would agree to the abrogation. The German Government wished to have a speedy reply in clear terms; and he had been told that if the reply was a refusal or evasion, Germany would "lâcher Autriche sur la Serbie." M. Iswolsky said that this summons, which had the character of a diplomatic ultimatum, was of so grave a nature that he had requested that a Cabinet Council should be summoned and he had laid the question fully before his colleagues. He had explained to them that there were two alternatives: either that Russia should refuse to accept the German proposal or that she should accept it; an evasive or dilatory reply was excluded. If she were

⁽¹⁾ [A shorter account is given in Telegram No. 165 of same date. This is not reproduced but *cp. supra*, pp. 723-4, No. 748.]

to refuse the proposal it was clear that Austria in accordance with the statement of the German Ambassador, would attack Serbia, and the whole responsibility for the conflict would be thrown upon Russia. If the Russian Government, on the other hand, were in the interests of peace to accept the proposal, and announce that when approached by Austria-Hungary they would signify their consent to the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, they would then have their consciences perfectly clear. The Cabinet decided to authorize M. Iswolsky to accept the German proposal, and he would communicate their decision to the Emperor this evening and obtain His Majesty's sanction to it. He had made an appointment with Count Pourtalès to-night and would give him the reply. He read it to me: it was a simple acceptance to consent to the abrogation of Article 25, should Austria-Hungary demand it: and he had added that he trusted that, in view of the ready acquiescence of the Russian Government, Germany would use her good offices at Vienna to induce the Austro-Hungarian Government to be conciliatory in the negotiations regarding Serbia. (2)

I was, I confess, puzzled as to what to say. I should, I admit, have liked to have said a good deal on what seemed to me a surrender on the part of Russia, or, as he put it later to my French colleague, the "humiliation" of this country. M. Iswolsky was perfectly frank. He said the German summons was perhaps not an ultimatum in the sense that it threatened war as an alternative, but it was a diplomatic ultimatum. He would like to have met it differently, but it was necessary to look the facts in the face. He thought that for some time past the two central Powers had combined on their programme, and that they now considered that the moment had arrived for pushing Russia to the wall. The military preparations in Galicia were on a scale which was ominous, the immediate readiness of Germany for war was undoubted, and Russia was alone. France, even diplomatically, had supported Russia "très mollement": and she could not be depended upon; while, though England had been loyal throughout in her support, it was limited to diplomatic support. Russia was practically for active action isolated, and she was unable to face alone, in her present condition, the powerful combination of the central Powers. Baron d'Aehrenthal was browbeating Russia through Germany, and he had succeeded. It was useless to disguise the fact.

I pointed out to M. Iswolsky that by accepting the abrogation of Article 25 he was, in reality, abandoning his former standpoint: and once that Austria-Hungary was in possession of the knowledge that Russia had accepted the German request, it would, to my mind, somewhat hamper the discussions proceeding at Vienna. It practically amounted to Russia accepting the Austro-Turkish Protocol in so far as it concerned the annexation. I feared too that it would have the appearance that Russia had detached herself from her co-partners France and Great Britain; and I asked whether it would not be possible for him to inform Count Pourtalès that as discussions were proceeding at Vienna as to the discovery of a formula regarding the attitude of the Powers towards the Austro-Turkish protocol, it would be advisable to await their issue. Was it necessary further to give an immediate reply to Count Pourtalès? Could not he in the first place consult with the French and British Governments? M. Iswolsky said that there was no time for him to consult with Paris and London. Any delay would be misconstrued and might precipitate a catastrophe. His hands and those of the Powers were still perfectly free as to a Conference and the substitution of Article 25 by some other Article. Russia simply engaged, if asked, to consider Article 25 abrogated. She did not go further. Moreover, he must wait to see how Austria-Hungary propounded her request to Russia; and perhaps he might then have an opportunity of saying something further. I did not like to pursue the matter, though several other considerations presented themselves to my mind. I merely remarked that I was perplexed with these parallel negotiations between Berlin and St. Petersburg, Vienna and London, on

(2) [The text of both communications is in *Siebert* (1921), pp. 259-60 and *G.P.* XXVI, II, pp. 693-5 gives the instruction of Prince Bülow of 21st March. The instruction was drawn up by Herr von Kiderlen-Waechter, v. E. Jäckh: *Kiderlen-Wächter*, Berlin and Leipzig (1924), II, pp. 26-8. The communication was made on the 22nd and the reply given on the 23rd.]

practically the same subject. I asked the reason of Germany addressing herself to Russia alone. Why did she not sound other Powers also? He said he had put the question to Count Pourtalès, who had replied that Berlin considered that Russia was the most directly interested Power.

My French Colleague saw Monsieur Iswolsky immediately after my interview. Monsieur Iswolsky made him acquainted with the German communication and explained, as I have said, that Russia was compelled to submit to the humiliation; and that now for some years to come Europe would have to accustom herself to the hegemony of Germany. There were, I understand, some remarks exchanged as to the want of support which France had given and would have been likely to give, but these slight recriminations need hardly be reported.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 754.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11804/26/09/44A.

(No. 190.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. March 23, 1909.

R. March 29, 1909.

M. Iswolsky read to me to-day the text of the declarations which Baron d'Aehrenthal proposed should be made by the Powers and also by the Servian Government.⁽¹⁾ He said that he had also received the text of an amended declaration which you intended to suggest to Baron d'Aehrenthal for Servia to accept.⁽²⁾ He asked me whether I had received any instructions on these documents. I said that I had received no information at all on the subject, and I was, therefore, not in a position to discuss them, but that I should be glad to hear his opinion on the amended declaration which had emanated from you. He replied that he did not like it, as it seemed to him to go even further than that suggested by Baron D'Aehrenthal. He did not see how Servia could be asked to recognise a transaction which had been sanctioned by a *fait accompli* or by an accord between Austria-Hungary and Turkey, or by some other means. He imagined that Baron d'Aehrenthal would gladly accept it if it were proposed to him: but that it would be a question if Servia would be equally pleased. However it was of no use discussing these points, he remarked, as the amended declaration would have been communicated to Vienna; and he must leave His Majesty's Government and the Austro-Hungarian Government to continue their conversation, and await the results.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 718-9, No. 737.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 719-20, No. 739.]

No. 755.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 11714/26/09/44.

(No. 82.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 23, 1909.

I gave Count Metternich to-day copies of Baron Aehrenthal's draft declaration for Servia and of our own draft.

After reading them, he said he could not see any objection to Baron Aehrenthal's draft.

I said it appeared to us that our draft was one which Servia might accept without humiliation, and that the other contained certain phrases which would be humiliating to Servia and which could be imposed on her only by force.

Count Metternich maintained that Serbia would accept anything which the Powers advised.

I told him we could not join in advising anything which was humiliating, though we were quite willing to continue to do all we could to secure a declaration which would be in substance satisfactory to Austria, irreproachable in form, and free from all irritating language.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 756.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 11715/26/09/44.
(No. 46.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 23, 1909.

I saw Count Mensdorff to-day, and explained to him the difference between the Austrian draft and our draft for a Servian declaration.

We had endeavoured to suggest the utmost that could be secured by peaceful means without humiliating Serbia. It appeared to me that the Austrian draft entailed either humiliation or war.

If our efforts failed, and peace was broken, we should have to explain to Parliament the part we had played, and we should have to publish papers to justify our action and show why it had failed.

[I am, &c.]
E. G[REY].

No. 757.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 11372/26/09/44.
Tel. (No. 394.)

Foreign Office, March 24, 1909.
D. 6 P.M.

My tel[egram] No. 393 repeating to you my tel[egram] to Sir F. Cartwright No. 155.⁽¹⁾

Russian Chargé d'Affaires has made a comm[unicatio]n⁽²⁾ to me accepting the Austrian d[ra]ft declaration with certain modifications in preference to my proposal. I have accepted M. Isvolsky's suggestions as regards par[agraph] 1, but in view of Baron Aehrenthal's objections to my text of par[agraph] 2, I have accepted his text with two slight modifications of which you should inform M. Isvolsky.

If Baron d'Aehrenthal insists upon an unmodified declaration, which is humiliating to Serbia and can only be imposed upon her by force or by threat of force we shall decline to be any party to such proceedings by giving advice at Belgrade and it will be impossible for us to do any more to promote a peaceful settlement.

Repeated to Paris No. 225, Rome No. 148, Vienna No. 156.

⁽¹⁾ [v. immediately succeeding document.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *infra*, pp. 733-4, No. 762.]

No. 758.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 11199/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 24, 1909.

Tel. (No. 155.)

D. 6.45 P.M.

I see with regret from your tel[egram] No. 91⁽¹⁾ that B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal considers my text inadmissible though the words to which he takes most exception were his own originally and were only chosen by us in order to adhere as closely as possible to his drafts; it is evident that the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t will accept only verbal alterations in the declaration contained in your tel[egram] No. 88.⁽²⁾ I have therefore availed myself of this opening to propose certain modifications which may remove some of the objectionable features of the Austrian declaration in the hope that Baron d'Aehrenthal may fully realise the strenuous efforts made by H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t to meet his views in the interests of peace and that the proposed modifications may meet with his acceptance.

To make paragraph 1 of the declaration acceptable the second sentence should be modified as follows:—

“ Se rendant aux conseils des Grandes Puissances la Serbie s'engage dès-à-présent à s'abstenir d'une attitude de protestation et d'opposition dans la question de la Bosnie-Herzégovine et s'engage en outre à diriger le cours de sa politique envers l'Autriche-Hongrie de manière à vivre désormais avec cette dernière sur le pied de bon voisinage.”

In the second paragraph for the words “ Conformément à ses déclarations pacifiques ” substitute “ Se fiant aux assurances pacifiques du Gouv[ernemen]t Austro-Hongrois,” and for the words “ aux frontières de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de la Turquie ” substitute “ sur son territoire.”

The engagement which B[aron] Aehrenthal expressed himself as ready to take contained in point No. 3 of your tel[egram] No. 82⁽³⁾ should form a declaration on the part of the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 723, No. 747.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 718-9, No. 737.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 707-8, No. 721.]

No. 759.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, March 24, 1909.

F.O. 11362/26/09/44A.

D. 7.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 47.) Confidential.

R. 9.30 P.M.

Minister for Foreign Affairs read to me this evening telegrams from French Ambassadors at St. Petersburg and Vienna. The St. Petersburg telegram reported that German Ambassador had in courteous terms informed Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Austrian Government was about to request the Russian Government to at once recognize annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin. The German Government hoped that the Russian Government would feel able to answer in the affirmative, for in the contrary event Germany would feel bound to give a free hand to Austria as regards Serbia, and this might involve further complications affecting Germany as the ally of Austria. Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs, after consulting his colleagues and the Emperor, had given affirmative assurances to the German Ambassador. The Vienna telegram stated that German Ambassador had told a friend that he regarded war between Austria and Serbia as a certainty, and a war between Austria and Russia as

probable. The result would be to put a stop to the King of England's policy of isolating Germany.

Minister for Foreign Affairs is very much disgusted at result of M. Isvolsky's policy of bluff.

MINUTE.

This is a milk and water version of what actually happened.⁽¹⁾

L. M.
C. H.
E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 723-4, No. 748, and pp. 727-9, No. 753.]

No. 760.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, March 24, 1909.

F.O. 11364/26/09/44A.

D. 8.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 36.)

R. 8.30 P.M.

My telegram No. 34.⁽¹⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs informs me that Russia and Austria have accepted German proposal.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 761.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 11808/26/09/44A.

(No. 194.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 24, 1909.

Sir,

R. March 29, 1909.

M. Isvolsky read to me this afternoon the telegram which he had sent to M. de Poklewski explaining the reasons which had induced the Russian Government to consent to the demand which the German Government made the day before yesterday, and on which I reported in my despatch No. 189 of yesterday's date.⁽²⁾ His Excellency said that he could tell me that they had positive information that all was in readiness for invasion of Russia by Austrian forces and for an attack by Austria on Serbia in the event of Russia refusing to accept the German demand. I said that I had understood from him yesterday that what he feared was a combined attack by Germany and Austria on Russia, and that Russia was alone and could not resist the combination, as she was doubtful of France. Moreover, I did not still see the connection between the German demand and an attack by Austria on Serbia, especially at a moment when Baron d'Aehrenthal was profuse in his assurances that he had no intention, unless directly provoked by Serbia, of attacking that country. His Excellency said that of course the whole plan had been arranged between Germany and Austria. If Austria attacked Russia the Franco-Russian alliance did not come into force; no *casus fœderis* arose. Such an event would only occur if Germany attacked either France or Russia. Similarly, Germany was not bound to assist Austria if the latter attacked Russia. She was only bound to come to the aid of Austria if Russia initiated the offensive, but evidently of late there had been some amplification of the engagements, as there was not a shadow of doubt that if Austria were getting the worst of the conflict Germany would then step in. I said that I had always understood that Russia felt quite equal to engaging Austria alone. He said this was perfectly true, but that Russia, even if gaining the upper hand, would naturally be weakened, and that Germany with her fresh legions would fall on her. It was true that in that case France would have to act up to her part as ally, but the chances would not be equal. Moreover, Russia did not want a war. She was just beginning to bring order

⁽¹⁾ [A shorter account is given in Telegram No. 168 of 24th March.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 727-9, No. 753.]

into her finances, was reorganizing her army, and internal unrest was quieting down. A war would throw back all the progress effected, and would probably revive all the troubles from which Russia was just emerging. The whole matter was thoroughly threshed out during the Cabinet Meeting which lasted three hours; and the decision was arrived at to accept the German proposal. It was a hard pill to swallow, having to submit to what was practically an ultimatum.⁽³⁾ The whole Austro-German plan had been skilfully conceived, and the right moment chosen. Three or four years hence Russia would have so far recovered herself as to be able to speak in a different tone. This the two central Powers knew well, and they did not intend to let the moment pass by. I asked in that case whether he was quite sure that further demands would not be formulated. His Excellency said that very possibly they would be, but he could only wait till they arrived. In short, he added, the Austro-German combination was stronger than the triple *entente*. I said that I totally disagreed with him. Great Britain France and Russia were more than equal to any combination. His Excellency said that this might be so in a sense: but there was no alliance binding the three Powers together, and there was not that firmness and cohesion as existed between Austria and Germany.

I returned to the form of the reply which he had given to the German demand, and said that he was doubtless aware that in consenting to abrogate Article 25 he practically had recognised the annexation. He admitted this, but said Russia could not go to war over a formula. He believed that the reply which Russia had given would greatly facilitate the discussion in Vienna. I asked if he did not think that Russian prestige would not be greatly damaged in the Balkans, and whether Bulgaria might not consider that Austria and Germany were the Powers of the future. He said that he did not think so. I asked if he were still quite confident that Bulgaria would be on the side of Russia. His Excellency did not reply directly to this question, but repeated that he considered that the great sacrifice which Russia had made would facilitate the settlement of all the Balkan questions.

It will be of interest to see what view the Russian press will take of the matter when they are acquainted with what has passed.

I repeated to M. Iswolsky my regret that he had not, before replying to Count Pourtalès, consulted with His Majesty's Government and the French Government. He said that he had not had time. I must observe in connection with this point that M. Iswolsky had received the German communication on Monday afternoon at 4.30. He saw the French Ambassador immediately afterwards, but did not mention the matter: and it was only on the following afternoon that he made Admiral Touchard and myself acquainted with what had passed, and after the decision of the Cabinet Council. He communicated his reply to Count Pourtalès in the night after his return from taking the orders of the Emperor.⁽⁴⁾

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

⁽³⁾ [v. telegram of the Emperor Nicholas II to the Emperor William II (*pr.* 22 March, 1909) and reply of March 27, *G.P.* XXVI, II, pp. 700-1, 716-7.]

⁽⁴⁾ [For some later comments on M. Iswolski's attitude, *v. G.P.* XXVI, II, pp. 783-6, and a letter of May 8 from the Emperor William to the Emperor Nicholas, pp. 786-8. *v. also* S. Sazonov: *Les Années Fatales*, Paris (1927), pp. 18-22.]

No. 762.

Memorandum communicated by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires.

F.O. 11372/26/09/44.

March 24, 1909.

La première phrase du projet de Sir Edward Grey pour une réponse de la Serbie à l'Autriche⁽¹⁾ semble de nature à s'écarter des principes soutenus jusqu'ici.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 719-20, No. 739.]

A ce point de vue, il paraîtrait au Gouvernement Impérial de beaucoup préférable de s'en tenir au paragraphe 1 de la dernière formule amendé[e] Autrichienne.⁽²⁾ Pour le rendre tout à fait acceptable il suffirait de modifier comme suit la seconde phrase :

“Se rendant aux conseils des Grandes Puissances la Serbie s'engage⁽³⁾ à s'abstenir d'une attitude de protestation et d'opposition dans la question de la Bosnie-Herzégovine et s'engage en outre à diriger le cours de sa politique envers l'Autriche-Hongrie de manière à vivre désormais avec cette dernière sur le pied de bon voisinage.”

Pour ce qui est du paragraphe 2 concernant le désarmement et les bandes, le Gouvernement Impérial accepte volontiers la rédaction du Cabinet de Londres, sauf à remplacer les mots : “sur les frontières de l'Autriche-Hongrie et de la Turquie” — par les mots : “sur son territoire.”

Le Gouvernement Impérial trouve en outre inutile en vue du projet Austro-Hongrois, d'insérer dans la déclaration Serbe une obligation spéciale quant au traité de commerce.

Les engagements que l'Autriche-Hongrie se dit prête à prendre de ne pas imposer des entraves au développement normal de l'armée Serbe et de ne pas attaquer la Serbie si celle-ci obéit aux conseils des Puissances.—ces engagements devraient, bien entendu, faire l'objet d'une déclaration dont les Cabinets prendraient acte.

Si le Cabinet de Londres partage l'avis exposé ci-dessus l'entente avec le Cabinet de Vienne pour la rédaction de la déclaration serbe pourrait être confiée sur la base susindiquée aux Représentants des Puissances à Vienne.

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 718, No. 737.]

⁽³⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 731, No. 758. In this version the words “dès-à-présent” appear after “s'engage.” They are added in pencil on the memorandum communicated by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires, but were obviously not part of the original document.]

No. 763.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 10451/26/09/44.

(No. 21.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 24, 1909.

The Servian Chargé d'Affaires called at this Department on the 17th instant and communicated the accompanying memorandum on the subject of the relations between Austria-Hungary and Servia.

After reading it Sir C. Hardinge informed M. Grouitch that he did not believe that an ultimatum was immediately impending, since the Austro-Hungarian Government would probably reply to the last Servian note,⁽¹⁾ and much would then depend on the attitude and reply of Servia. He said that the tone of the last Servian note had not been of a palliative nature, and that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] much regretted that M. Milovanovitch had not consulted C[oun]t Forgach or the foreign representatives before dispatching it, as they would have given useful and friendly advice. Sir C. Hardinge further suggested the sort of reply which would have been suitable, as contained in my telegram No. 126 of the 16th instant to H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Vienna,⁽²⁾ and remarked that the best course to have pursued would have been to give tangible proof of the readiness of the Servian Gov[ernmen]t to discuss the Commercial Treaty by sending Delegates to Vienna to open negotiations.

M. Grouitch said that the only course now open was to prolong the Treaty till the end of the year, to which Sir C. Hardinge replied that the Servian note was not the way to obtain this result, which might have been brought about by the despatch of Delegates.

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 679–80, No. 683.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 690, No. 697.]

M. Grouitch stated that he was kept quite uninformed as to what had been going on in Belgrade, but he wished to draw attention to the third paragraph of the memorandum, and to point out that the disarmament of Servia could be obtained by the collective action of the Powers, if they considered it necessary. This, he said, was the key to the situation.

M. Grouitch was unable to say whether the memorandum was, or was not, a circular.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY].

Enclosure in No. 763.

Memorandum communicated by the Servian Chargé d'Affaires.

Légation Royale de Serbie,

March 17, 1909.

Le Gouvernement serbe est informé que le Gouvernement austro-hongrois n'est pas satisfait de la réponse donnée par le Gouvernement serbe à sa note, et que la véritable raison de ce mécontentement provient de ce que la Serbie n'a pas voulu entrer en conversation directe avec l'Autriche-Hongrie au sujet de la question de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine et déclarer, en échange de concessions économiques, qu'elle considérerait la question comme close par l'arrangement entre la Turquie et l'Autriche-Hongrie.

Le Gouvernement serbe est encore informé que le gouvernement austro-hongrois insistera de nouveau dans le sens ci-dessus et qu'il adressera en même temps à la Serbie un ultimatum concernant le désarmement.

Le Gouvernement serbe ne peut pas donner, au sujet de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine, des déclarations telles que les désire le Gouvernement austro-hongrois; il lui serait de même impossible de procéder au désarm[em]ent à la suite d'un ultimatum. Si le désarmement de la Serbie est nécessaire, les Puissances peuvent le lui demander collectivement. De même, la Serbie ayant remis sa cause aux Puissances, ces dernières peuvent lui déclarer collectivement comment elles envisagent sa situation à l'égard de la solution actuelle de la question de la Bosnie et de l'Herzégovine. Mais la Serbie ne peut en aucun cas être forcée de faire à l'Autriche-Hongrie des déclarations qui signifieraient l'abandon des droits nationaux et des aspirations serbes.

Au cas où un ultimatum serait adressé par l'Autriche-Hongrie, la Serbie sollicitera l'entremise des Puissances, et, si elle est attaquée, elle se défendra de la manière la plus résolue et jusqu'à la dernière extrémité.

17 mars 1909.

[ED. NOTE.

Memorandum by Mr. H. Montgomery.⁽¹⁾

Foreign Office, March 24, 1909.

The Secretary of the German Embassy called this afternoon. He said that the Ambassador had received instructions to make a communication but that as H[is] E[xcellency] was away for the day he thought it better to inform us privately of it so that Sir Edward Grey should have an opportunity of considering it before C[oun]t Metternich called which he would probably do tomorrow. Herr von Kühlmann then read me the instructions: they were to the effect that the German Gov[ernmen]t had "sounded the Russian Gov[ernmen]t in a friendly way, and acting as broker for Austria" as to whether they would be willing to reply in the affirmative to a request from Austria that they should acquiesce in the abrogation of Art. 25 of the Treaty of Berlin. The Russian Gov[ernmen]t had expressed their willingness to give their assent to its abrogation without any conditions.⁽²⁾ The German Embassy in London was instructed to make a similar *démarche* here. They had approached Russia first as the most interested party.

March 24, 1909.

H. M.]

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 53.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, pp. 727-9, No. 753.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, March 24, 1909.

I was surprised at the communication which Iswolsky made to me yesterday in regard to the German summons to "stand and deliver": and I was astonished that the Russian Gov[ernmen]t had capitulated with such promptitude and so completely. The German Gov[ernmen]t have shifted their ground, as originally they had asked Russia to agree to an exchange of notes as to sanctioning the Protocol and this request had been put forward suavely and gently. Now they come forward with a demand to agree to an abrogation of Art[icle] 25, and seriously connect it with a threat, in case of refusal or evasion, that they would let Austria loose on Servia. I do not see the connection: and the threat sounds oddly when d'Aehrenthal is assuring us that he has no hostile intentions on Servia. I remarked to Iswolsky that if Russia assented to the abrogation of Art[icle] 25 she practically agreed to the annexation. He did not deny this. I pressed him to delay giving a reply, but he said that he could not. The tone of the German communication was too peremptory and decided to permit of any delay. He had promised to give an answer that evening, as he must do so.

Furthermore he said that he was by no means sure that the alternative would resolve itself simply into an attack by Austria on Servia. He feared that it might develope [*sic*] into an attack by Germany and Austria on Russia. The military measures taken in Galicia, and the high state of preparedness of the German army for immediate action were ominous: and the ultimatum, for in reality it was an ultimatum, contained elements of serious danger. Russia, in present circumstances, could not face alone so powerful a combination. France could not be relied upon, and England limited her support to diplomatic measures. Russia was isolated and must submit.

After this easy victory, I should not be surprised if greater demands were made of Russia, and that she, like Servia, will be asked to change her course of policy, and if this were to come about a wide field would be opened out. My firm opinion is that both Germany and Austria are carrying out a line of policy and action carefully prepared and thought out. Algeciras had to be revenged: the "ring" broken through: and the Triple entente dissipated. The Franco-German agreement was the first step; and France is a quarter of the way towards a fuller understanding with Germany. Russia is temporarily weak, with a timorous Foreign Minister. She had to be frightened out of the entente, and the first step towards this has been eminently successful. The Franco-Russian alliance has not borne the test: and the Anglo-Russian entente is not sufficiently strong or sufficiently deeprooted to have any appreciable influence. The hegemony of the Central Powers will be established in Europe, and England will be isolated. The activity in building up the German navy is significant: and the sudden entry of Germany on the scene here is also significant. When we have passed through the present "Sturm und Drang" period, I should not be surprised if we were to find both France and Russia gravitating rapidly towards the Central Powers, as neither of the former, distrustful of each other, feels that she can stand alone against the power of the central combination.

Our entente, I much fear, will languish, and possibly die. If it were possible to extend and strengthen it by bringing it nearer to the nature of an alliance, it would then be possible to deter Russia from moving towards Berlin. The bulk of intelligent public opinion is at present in favour of working with us, and is hostile to Austria and Germany: but if it be found that the entente cannot save them from humiliating concessions, public feeling would, perhaps reluctantly, recognise that

(1) [Grey MSS. (Russia), Vol. 34.]

terms had better be made with the other parties. The ultimate aims of Germany surely are, without doubt, to obtain the preponderance on the continent of Europe, and when she is strong enough, and apparently she is making very strenuous efforts to become so, that she will enter on a contest with us for maritime supremacy. In past times we have had to fight Holland, Spain and France for this supremacy, and personally I am convinced that, sooner or later, we shall have to repeat the same struggle with Germany.

If we could keep France and Russia on our side it would be well; and if we could contract some kind of an alliance with Russia, we should probably also steady France and prevent her from deserting to the Central Powers.

You will, I daresay, consider that I am pursuing nightmares, but I will run this risk and lay my opinion before you. It seems to me that we are approaching a critical period when a regrouping will take place in Europe, and hostile and indignant as is public opinion at present in Russia against Germany and Austria, this is no reason for concluding that it will be a permanent sentiment. We were not beloved a short time ago. We should not forget that in a very few years Russia will have regained her strength, and will again be a most important factor.

I wish that Iswolsky and his colleagues had stiffened their backs. Stolypine unluckily has gone to recuperate in the Caucasus. I think that they magnified the danger, as even admitting that Russia is for the moment weak, and that her Western provinces might be overrun, a greater man than exists at the present day found himself baffled and unable to subdue this country. Besides a great nation should not tamely accept a peremptory summons.

Y[ou]rs sincerely.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 765.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, March 25, 1909.

F.O. 11365/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 37.) Very Confidential.

D. 1.33 A.M.

R. 7 A.M.

French Ambassador has just told me that the Minister for Foreign Affairs said to him last night that he was glad that there was no longer any chance of France and Germany being drawn into conflict with one another, as in the event of war between Austria and Serbia, Russia would certainly hold aloof, and Germany would not feel called upon to move if independent Russian Slav bands went to the assistance of Serbia.

No. 766.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 25, 1909.

F.O. 11463/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 97.)

D. 4.50 P.M.

R. 8 P.M.

Your telegram No. 155.⁽¹⁾

Without loss of time, I have seen the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and have submitted to him your proposed verbal alterations in the Austrian text.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 731, No. 758.]

After a long discussion with his Excellency, I have obtained that he will refer the matter to the Emperor, and he promises to reply to-morrow. Meanwhile, he has made the following comments with regard to your suggestions:—

In the second sentence of paragraph one Baron von Aehrenthal considers it impossible to give up the word “abandon.” He says for five months Serbia has carried (? on) a clearly hostile policy, and for Parliamentary reasons, if for no other, he must have clear assurances that this policy will be reversed, or, in other words, abandoned. According to him the word “abandon” has been expressly chosen, as it does not contain a moral condemnation of Serbia’s policy in the past, but as that policy has been distinctly hostile to this country, it obtains for Austria-Hungary the necessary security against its continuance in the future. In Baron von Aehrenthal’s opinion the word “abandon” does not cast a slur on Serbia’s politics.

In the same sentence Baron von Aehrenthal objects to the words “question of Bosnia and Herzegovina,” as he asserts that there is no such question. He adheres to his wording “annexation since last autumn.” The latter is a statement of fact which cannot be disputed, while the altered wording opens the door to all sorts of theoretical difficulties.

In opening sentence of paragraph 2 Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs would not admit alteration of his wording, but I suggested some compromise which he (? showed) some inclination to accept, and the passage would then (? run): “Conformément à ses déclarations pacifiques et ayant pleine confiance dans la politique bienveillante et pacifique de l’Autriche-Hongrie, la Serbie. . . .”

With regard to alteration in the final words he will probably accept your rendering of them.

With regard to the engagement (? which) the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs volunteered which formed point 3 of my telegram No. 82,⁽²⁾ his Excellency made no objection to giving same in a more formal manner, but, in his opinion, it would be a mistake for the Powers to communicate the same to the Servian Government just now, as they might interpret it to be an encouragement to them to begin re-arming at once.

I inquired of the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs when the Austrian note would be presented to the Servian Government, as I saw in the papers that it had reached Belgrade. He replied that I need not trouble, as he would take no step while the present negotiations lasted.

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 707–8, No. 721.]

No. 767.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 25, 1909.

F.O. 11461/26/09/44A.

D. 5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 169.)

R. 6 P.M.

Your telegram No. 394.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky agrees entirely with all amendments mentioned in your telegram No. 155 to Vienna.⁽²⁾

He says that if Baron Aehrenthal really wishes for a pacific solution he should accept amended text, but that all now depends on his real intentions and on advice which he may receive from Berlin. He has hopes that this advice will be couched in a pacific sense after the great concession His Majesty’s Government (and) Russia made recently.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 730, No. 757.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 731, No. 758.]

No. 768.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 11551/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 25, 1909.

Tel. (No. 124.)

D. 7.15 P.M.

In reply to German Amb[assado]r's inquiry whether we would give the same unconditional assent to the abolition of Art[icle] 25 as Russia has promised to give if Austria asks for it.⁽¹⁾ I have given the German Amb[assado]r the following mem[orandu]m of our views⁽²⁾ :—

“The assurance of a readiness to accept Baron d'Aehrenthal's declaration respecting the annexation at a future conference affects only one of the various questions which have been raised by the action of Austria last autumn. At the present moment His Majesty's Government are deeply interested in the preservation of the peace of Europe and therefore in a settlement of the Servian crisis in particular. The assurance for which the German Government ask while involving an alteration of the Treaty of Berlin leaves the Servian question unsettled and makes no provision for the solution of other questions relating to the Treaty of Berlin in which England and the other European Powers are equally interested. His Majesty's Government are not disposed to give the assurance required until the Servian question has been settled in a pacific manner on lines satisfactory to them and the other Powers and until a solution has been assured of other questions arising from the annexation of Bosnia by Austria especially the alteration of Article 29. When this result has been obtained His Majesty's Government will be ready to agree to any peaceful settlement based on mutual good-will amongst the Powers.”

After reading it the Amb[assado]r remarked that this was a very grave decision which imperilled peace.

I replied that this could only mean that Austria intended to attack Serbia or to dictate terms to her if we did not do what Austria asked. The British Gov[ernmen]t would never consent to act under pressure of this kind. If we gave an unconditional promise without any assurance that Austria was going to deal with moderation as regards Serbia and Montenegro we should simply be making her more free than she was before to treat them as she liked. However little British interests might be directly involved we could not make ourselves a party to proceedings of this kind.

To give unconditional assent as asked gave no security that peace would follow.

I specially called attention to the omission of all reference to Art[icle] 29 the modification of which had always hitherto been considered an essential condition of the eventual recognition of the annexation of Bosnia.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 735, *Ed. note.*]

(²) [*v. G.P. XXVI, II, pp. 703-704, 707-708.*]

No. 769.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11462/26/09/44A.

Rome, D. March 25, 1909, 9.55 P.M.

Tel. (No. 53.)

R. March 26, 1909, 7 A.M.

German Ambassador has this day informed the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs that the Russian Government have consented to the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, and inquired whether Italy would follow suit. His Excellency replied that the Italian Government would acquiesce if the Austrian Government would at the same time confirm their declaration already made regarding modifications in Article 29. He has made the same announcement to the Austrian Ambassador.⁽¹⁾

(¹) [*cp. infra*, p. 745, No. 777.]

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 12134/26/09/44.

(No. 86.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 25, 1909.

Count Metternich came to see me to-day,⁽¹⁾ and said that the principal difficulty with regard to a *démarche* at Belgrade appeared to be that the question of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina had not yet been settled by the Powers.

The German Government had been in friendly communication with the Russian Government to find out whether they would agree to the abolition of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, if Austria asked them in a Note, as the Russian Government would then be in a better position to take a firm attitude at Belgrade. M. Iswolsky had declared that the Russian Government would assent without reserve if the Austrian Government asked the Powers whether they would sanction the abolition of Article 25 on the basis of the Austro-Turkish Agreement. The Austrian Government were ready to issue such a Note now, and the German Government wished to know whether we were prepared to answer it as favourably as the Russian Government. The German Government regarded the decision of M. Iswolsky as an important step towards a peaceful solution of the crisis, and the procedure proposed by them would help the *démarche* at Belgrade, in which we ourselves had been interested.

I replied that the foundation of the Treaty of Berlin had been that no two Powers, even those most directly interested at the time, such as Russia and Turkey, were to settle Near Eastern questions independently of the other parties to the Treaty. On the present occasion, not two Powers, but one alone, Austria, had announced the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, without consulting the other Treaty Powers. We had felt, at the time, that it was not for us to take special measures with regard to alterations in the Treaty, unless our interests were directly affected. If they were directly affected by other alterations, we should of course take what steps we thought advisable to protect them. I could not but feel, however, that the way in which this alteration of the Treaty of Berlin had been presented invalidated and rendered insecure all the other provisions of that Treaty; and if our formal consent was to be given, it must be as part of a settlement insuring peace and good-will. I then gave Count Metternich a Memorandum with our definite reply to his request.

After reading it, he said this was a very grave decision on our part which endangered peace. Why should we stand in the way of what Russia was doing for peace? He could not understand why the English people should appear specially as the champions of Serbia.

I said I did not think English feeling was specially the champion of Serbia, though if Serbia, a small country, was attacked by Austria, British sympathies might be with the small country, as was usually the case. As for Russia, we were not standing in the way of anything which Russia was prepared to do: that was her own affair.

I made no reproach against the manner in which the German Government had presented their request to us; but I must remark that, as a matter of fact, the impression at St. Petersburg had been that, if Russia did not give an unconditional assent, Austria would attack Serbia. That was the pressure which was behind this request: and, whatever other Powers might do, the British Government would not give their formal consent to an alteration of the Treaty of Berlin under pressure of this kind.

As for the difference between peace and war. Public opinion here resented the manner in which the alteration of the Treaty of Berlin was being brought about, and in any case public opinion would not be well pleased when the British Government indorsed and countersigned the alteration. I could not expect public approval of our

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 739, No. 768.]

doing this, unless it was clear that we were doing it in order to secure a peaceful settlement. If Austria would make it clear that she was prepared to deal leniently, moderately,—if Count Metternich liked, I would even say generously,—with the interests of Serbia and Montenegro, we would give our recognition to the annexation in order to complete a settlement securing peace and good-will. But if we were to do what Austria now asked, without any such assurance from her, we should simply be making Austria even more free than she was previously to send an ultimatum to Serbia, and to dictate any terms she pleased to Serbia and Montenegro. In other words, we should really be making it more easy for Austria to demand what settlement she liked by force. The British Government could not be parties to a proceeding of this sort.

Count Metternich urged that Serbia had nothing to do with the Treaty of Berlin, and that he did not see what special interest we could have in Serbia.

I observed that, in the Memorandum I had just given him, I had prefaced our remarks about Serbia by explaining that our interest in the Servian question was that peace depended upon its settlement. Although Serbia was not a party to the Treaty of Berlin, her territory formed part of the region which the Treaty regarded as of European interest. I observed, also, that we were now being asked to recognise the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina without any mention of a modification of Article 29.

Count Metternich said he had always understood that Austria would not make any difficulty about this.

I said that I had understood so too, which made it all the more strange that Austria should now ask for recognition without mentioning the Article.

Count Metternich impressed upon me the grave position in which we should be when all the other Powers agreed to the Austrian request, and we alone stood out.

I said I was not aware that they had all agreed yet. For the present, I could not give any other answer.

We had some further argument on the same lines. Count Metternich continued to maintain that we were obstructing peace by refusing recognition. I, on the contrary, maintained that by giving unconditional recognition we should not be securing peace, but might simply be preparing the way for a settlement of the Servian and Montenegrin difficulties by force, to which method we should then indirectly be parties; whereas, if Austria promised peace, we should be quite ready to become partners in a general peaceful settlement by doing what Austria desired.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

App[rove]d.—E.R.

No. 771.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 11463/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 26, 1909.

Tel. (No. 403.)

D. 3:30 P.M.

Sir F. Cartwright's tel[egram] No. 97.⁽¹⁾

We are still awaiting a definite reply from B[aron] Aehrenthal but it is evident that he intends to assume an unbending attitude as regards his text of the 1st paragraph of the draft note to be addressed by the Servian Gov[ernment]⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 737–8, No. 766.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 718, No. 737.]

while it seems likely that our proposed modifications of the second par[agraph] will be practically accepted.⁽³⁾

It appears to H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] that, in view of the general tenour of the note, it is hardly worth while to risk the cause of general peace by splitting hairs upon the interpretation to be placed upon certain words which in any case cannot make the note palatable to the Servian Gov[ernment] although no doubt they will accept it under the collective pressure of the Powers whatever its ultimate form may be.

We shall have done our utmost to secure a more satisfactory wording, and it seems to us that it would be more politic to accept whatever text may be ultimately agreed upon between H[is] M[ajesty's] Amb[assador] at Vienna and B[aron] d'Aehrenthal and thus to cut the ground from under the feet of those who wish to force an ultimatum to be followed by an attack upon Servia. Such a course would even seem to be preferable in the interests of Servia herself, to say nothing of Europe as a whole.

I propose therefore, as soon as I receive B[aron] d'Aehrenthal's final reply, to inform him that although I consider that either of my two texts would have been preferable to that upon which he insists I will, in the interests of peace, endeavour to obtain without delay the assent of the other Powers to collective advice at Belgrade that it should be accepted by the Servian Gov[ernment].

Inform Gov[ernment] to which you are accredited and ask if they agree with these views.

Sent to Sir F. Bertie, No. 231, and Sir R. Rodd, No. 154.

(3) [*v. supra*, p. 731, No. 758.]

No. 772.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, March 26, 1909.

F.O. 11597/11597/29/39.

D. 4.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 27.)

R. 5.45 P.M.

Crown Prince of Servia.

Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning confirmed the report that the Crown Prince addressed a letter to the Prime Minister on 24th March, renouncing his right to the succession to the throne and all other constitutional privileges, in consequence of accusations that have been publicly brought against him. . . .

No. 773.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 26, 1909.

F.O. 11591/26/09/44A.

D. 4.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 99.)

R. 5.35 P.M.

My telegram No. 97.⁽¹⁾

After I left Baron von Aehrenthal yesterday he went at once to see the Emperor, to lay before His Majesty your proposed alterations of the Austrian text, together

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 737-8, No. 766.]

with my arguments in support of them. After mature deliberation it was finally decided that your alterations in paragraph 1 could not be adopted.⁽²⁾

With regard to proposed alteration of paragraph 2,⁽²⁾ Baron von Aehrenthal has altered it as follows:—

“Conformément à ces (group omitted: ?déclarations) et confiante dans les intentions pacifiques de l’Autriche-Hongrie, la Serbie ramènera”

As regards alteration in final sentence, Baron von Aehrenthal accepts your wording: “Sur son territoire.”

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 731, No. 758.]

No. 774.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 11551/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 26, 1909.

Tel. (No. 163.)

D. 4.35 P.M.

You should point out in a friendly spirit to Baron d’Aehrenthal that position in which we are placed by German request made on behalf of Austria⁽¹⁾ appears to us as follows:—

We are to give what I now gather from the German Embassy to be an immediate and unconditional assent to abolition of Article 25 of Treaty of Berlin, the Powers will then be given an opportunity (though even this is not certain) of inducing Serbia under pressure if need be to write a note in terms dictated by Austria. Should they feel unable to do this Austria will presumably issue an ultimatum to Serbia, and the assent of the Powers to the abolition of Article 25 will in no way have ameliorated the situation. H[is] M[ajesty’s] Gov[ernment] have no wish to assert special interests of their own in the matter, which go beyond the facts of the case, but they cannot accede to the request which has been made without some assurance that they are not being placed in the position or made parties to the procedure described and that their assent will contribute to a peaceful and not a forcible solution of present difficulties.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 735, *Ed. note*, p. 739, No. 768, and pp. 740–1, No. 770.]

No. 775.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 26, 1909.

F.O. 11599/26/09/44A.

D. 4.35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 170.)

R. 8 P.M.

Your telegram No. 124 to Berlin.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky has received by telegram from London text of Memorandum which you gave to German Ambassador, but as it was in Russian he asked me whether I could give him a copy in English, which I did. He says he understood French Government would give a somewhat similar reply to that given by His Majesty’s Government.

I remarked that I still regretted that he had not consulted with His Majesty’s Government and the French Government before giving his reply.

He said that if he had waited to consult the two Governments Austrian troops would have been by now over the Servian frontier, and possibly over the Russian frontier also. He feared that he would be accused by Austria and Germany of having given his consent and then suggested to French and British Government to refuse

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 739, No. 768.]

theirs. I said this seemed to me to be an unlikely charge to be made, and one which it would be easy to refute.

He considered war with Serbia was inevitable. I observed that he had foretold this eventuality continually for some weeks past, but it seemed to me that an unconditional recognition of annexation would not by any means have averted it, as Austria would then have had her hands perfectly free either to force Serbia to accept terms she dictated to her or to take hostile action against her. Besides, discussions at Vienna were not concluded.

He said he expected a furious onslaught from the press here now that it was known that Russia had accepted abrogation of Article 25.

He did not quite understand in your Memorandum words "Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' declaration respecting the annexation at a future Conference." He had been asked whether, in case Austria asked him to accept without reserve abrogation of Article 25, he would agree. There had been no mention of a Conference in the communication made to him.

No. 776.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 26, 1909.

F.O. 11592/26/09/44A.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 100.)

R. 6.45 P.M.

My telegram No. 99.⁽¹⁾

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs impressed on me the urgent necessity of settling without further delay formula of assurances which the Powers would be prepared to press Servian Government to give Austria.

Differences of opinion between His Majesty's Government and Austrian Government having now been reduced to a matter of mere verbal alteration, his Excellency sincerely hoped that you would accept his final rendering of text. He said he would wait till Sunday for your definite reply. If this reply should unfortunately prove unsatisfactory he would be compelled to assume that the mediation of the Powers had failed, and would be reduced to send in Austrian reply to last Servian note. He is sending instructions to Austrian Ambassador in London to see you to-morrow, and to repeat to you formally explanations with regard to point 3 of my telegram No. 82.⁽²⁾ His Excellency repeated to me formally these explanations and assurances, but said he could not do so officially, as it would be inconsistent with the dignity of a Great Power to declare solemnly that she had no intention of interfering with natural development of the army of a neighbouring country.

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs assured me that he has assurances from Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs that he will raise no objection to the last Austrian text if it is approved by you. This is confirmed to me by the Russian Chargé d'Affaires.

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs hoped that if you accept his text the Powers will lay it before the Servian Government, so that Servian crisis may finally be settled before the end of next week.⁽³⁾

If Servia accepts the advice of the Powers, he would suggest that the following procedure should be adopted: Servian Minister at Vienna should present a note to the Austro-Hungarian Government commencing more or less as follows: "With

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 742-3, No. 773.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 707-8, No. 721.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. Sirbert* (1921), pp. 263-4.]

reference to the previous note of the Servian Government to Austro-Hungarian Government, and in order to clear up any possible misunderstandings which it may have caused, the Servian Minister is instructed to give the following explanations to Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs." Then follows quotation of Austrian text.

No. 777.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 26, 1909.

F.O. 11594/26/09/44A.

D. 5.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 102.)

R. 6.45 P.M.

Your telegram No. 160, (repeating Tel[egram] to Sir E. Goschen No. 124).⁽¹⁾

Italian Ambassador tells me that Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, on being questioned by German Ambassador in the sense of Count Metternich's communication to you, replied that Italy had no objection to the abolition of Article 25, provided that Article 29 were altered in the sense he wished.⁽²⁾ Italian Ambassador has obtained the necessary assurances with regard to the alteration of this Article.

I inquired of Baron d'Aehrenthal to-day whether he was about to issue Circular to the Powers asking for their consent to abrogation of Article 25 without mentioning to him contents of your telegram No. 160. I added that if Servian crisis could be terminated next week it might exercise a favourable influence on replies of the Powers, and it was therefore desirable to postpone issue of Circular for the moment. He finally said that he would do so.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 739, No. 768.]

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 739, No. 769.]

No. 778.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 12135/26/09/44.

(No. 87.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 26, 1909.

I told Count Metternich to-day that, as we had not yet received a definite reply to the proposals we had made for the alteration of the wording of the last draft of a Servian Note, and I did not wish it to be understood that our refusal to recognise the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina immediately and unconditionally was intended to break off those negotiations, I had instructed Sir Fairfax Cartwright to explain the position to Baron Aehrenthal.

I then gave Count Metternich a paraphrase of Telegram No. 163 to Sir Fairfax Cartwright.⁽¹⁾

Count Metternich said it appeared from a broad construction of this statement that, if Austria agreed to a note which we thought Serbia could accept, we would agree to the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I told him this was one possible construction of our communication, provided it was always understood that Article 29 must be settled at the same time. But generally the view of the Gov[ernmen]t was that our recognition of the annexation of Bosnia must be part of a real peaceful settlement, and that we could not give the recognition without knowing what was to follow it.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A pp[rove]d.—E.R.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 743, No. 774.]

No. 779.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

Rome, March 27, 1909.

F.O. 11741/26/09/44A.

D. 2.25 P.M.

Tel. (No. 54.)

R. 5 P.M.

Your telegram No. 154.⁽¹⁾

Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs agrees to course proposed, and undertakes, as soon as text is settled, to give his adherence. He added that Servian Minister had yesterday officially informed him that his Government would accept any Declaration recommended by the Powers collectively.

He was at great pains to explain that his (group omitted: ?reply to) German Ambassador regarding assurance of consent to abolition of Article 25 was practically tantamount to yours. He had not specially referred to Servia, because he had been informed that the Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs in consenting to the German proposal had received a definite assurance that Servia would not be attacked. He therefore only dwelt on Article 29, and he had told Austrian Ambassador that he would resign rather than accept proposal without specific assurances on this point.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 741-2, No. 771, repeating Telegram No. 403 to Sir A. Nicolson.]

No. 780.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 11591/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 27, 1909.

Tel. (No. 113.)

D. 3 P.M.

The telegrams that have been repeated to you will have given you full details as to the text of the note which we consider both necessary and desirable that the Servian Gov[ernmen]t should address to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t in order to maintain peace and to avoid the possibility of an attack. We have been anxious throughout to secure a text that will be as palatable as possible to Servia and we are now quite sure that present form is the best that can be obtained. It is therefore essential that it should be accepted verbatim, no further modification being possible.⁽¹⁾

You should, as soon as your French, Russian and Italian colleagues have received instructions, cooperate with them collectively to advise the Servian Gov[ernmen]t strongly to agree to address a note in these terms to the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t.

You may inform the Servian Gov[ernmen]t of the pacific assurances given by B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal to Sir F. Cartwright as reported in his tel[egram] No. 83.⁽²⁾

If the Servian Gov[ernmen]t are so unwise as to refuse the advice of the Powers, we shall not be able to do anything more for them and they will have to abide by the consequences of their refusal.

Repeated to Paris, No. 240, Vienna, No. 168, St. Petersburg, No. 415, Rome, No. 163.

(¹) [*v. infra*, pp. 747-8, No. 782.]

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 707, No. 720.]

No. 781.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 11591/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 27, 1909.

Tel. (No. 167.)

D. 3 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 99.⁽¹⁾

You should inform B[aron] d'Aehrenthal that, although I am still of opinion that either of the texts proposed by me would have been preferable to that upon which

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 742-3, No. 773.]

he insists for par[agraph] 1, I am ready, in the interests of peace, to concede the point and to accept the wording of the Austrian text as finally agreed upon with him.⁽²⁾ I am in communication with the French, Russian and Italian Gov[ernmen]ts to invite their cooperation at Belgrade to secure the acceptance of the note by the Servian Government without delay.

In view of the reference to "the pacific intentions of Austria" it would, I think, be desirable that you should suggest to B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal to give without delay to the French, Russian and Italian Amb[assadors] similar verbal assurances to those contained in your tel[egram] No. 83⁽³⁾ if he has not already done so, so that the Representatives at Belgrade may each of them be in a position to confirm authoritatively the statement and thus materially assist the Powers to obtain from the Servian Gov[ernmen]t the pledge to disarm. It might be of advantage that B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal should also give to the three Amb[assadors] similar explanations as regards point 3 of your tel[egram] No. 82⁽⁴⁾ as he has already given to you. Perhaps this has already been done.

It is I presume understood that if Serbia presents this note to Austria she will receive a conciliatory reply and that the Powers in advising her to send the note will not be exposing her to a rebuff.

You should urge your French, Russian and Italian colleagues to recommend to their Gov[ernmen]ts the acceptance of the text as now arranged and the issue of instr[uctions] to their Ministers at Belgrade to cooperate at once and collectively with H[is] M[ajesty]'s Minister to obtain its acceptance by the Servian Gov[ernmen]t.

In the event of B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal giving the assurances suggested above I hope that the Amb[assadors] will, to save time, at once inform their respective Ministers at Belgrade.

Repeated to Paris, No. 239. Rome. No. 162, St. Petersburg, No. 414, Belgrade, No. 112.

(2) [v. immediately succeeding document.]

(3) [v. *supra*, p. 707, No. 720.]

(4) [v. *supra*, pp. 707-8, No. 721.]

No. 782.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 11591/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 27, 1909.

Tel. (No. 413.)

D. 3.10 P.M.

Following is the final text of the Austrian proposal as agreed upon at Vienna to which I have given my assent:—

"La Serbie reconnaît qu'elle n'a pas été atteinte dans ses droits par le fait accompli créé en Bosnie-Herzégovine et qu'elle se conformera par conséquent à telle décision que les Puissances prendront par rapport à l'Article 25 du Traité de Berlin. Se rendant aux conseils des Grandes Puissances, la Serbie s'engage dès à présent à abandonner l'attitude de protestation et d'opposition qu'elle a observé à l'égard de l'annexion depuis l'automne dernier et s'engage en outre à changer le cours de sa politique actuelle envers l'Autriche Hongrie pour vivre désormais avec cette dernière sur le pied d'un bon voisinage.

"Conformément à ces déclarations et confiante dans les intentions pacifiques de l'Autriche Hongrie la Serbie ramènera son armée à l'état du printemps de 1908 en ce qui concerne son organisation sa dislocation et son effectif. Elle désarmera et licenciera ses volontaires et ses bandes, et elle empêchera la formation de nouvelles unités irrégulières sur son territoire."

If the Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited also assent ask them to send immediate instr[uctio]ns to their R[epresentative]s at Belgrade to cooperate collectively and with H[is] M[ajesty's] Minister to obtain the acceptance by the Servian Gov[ernmen]t of the verbatim text of the note.

If the Servian Gov[ernmen]t accept the advice of the Powers I would suggest that the Servian Minister at Vienna should present a note to the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t more or less in the following terms :—

“ With reference to the previous note of the Servian Government to Austro-Hungarian Government, and in order to clear up any possible misunderstandings which it may have caused, the Servian Minister is instructed to give the following explanations to Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs.”

Also to Sir F. Bertie, No. 238, Sir R. Rodd No. 161 and repeated to Vienna No. 166, Belgrade No. 111.

No. 788.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, March 27, 1909.

F.O. 11750/26/09/44A.

D. 3·22 P.M.

Tel. (No. 48.)

R. 4·45 P.M.

Near East.

I did not receive till late last night your telegram No. 231 of yesterday afternoon.⁽¹⁾ Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom I have seen this morning, and who had been informed by the French Ambassador in London of the proposed modifications and counter-amendments in discussion between you and Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs, entirely concurs in your views as recorded in your telegram. He will telegraph to French Ambassador at Vienna renewing his instructions to him to give his full support to his British colleague in his negotiations with Baron von Aehrenthal.

French Minister for Foreign Affairs told me that when German Ambassador asked him on the 25th March to (group omitted : ? accept), on a proposal from the Austrian Government, the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, the Russian Government having already agreed to do so, he had replied that, as Russia had consented, France would not make objection, but in consenting the French Government would be making a great sacrifice for the sake of the maintenance of peace, and they must have an assurance that it would be maintained.

If they gave their consent unconditionally and at once there would be no guarantee that Austria would not thereupon attack Servia. He must therefore certify that when application is made by Austria there must be assurance that the Servian question will be pacifically settled, and for this purpose the issue of the negotiations between London and Vienna must be awaited. French Minister for Foreign Affairs did not then know that you had made your assent to abrogation of Article 25 contingent upon the settlement of the other questions relating to the Treaty of Berlin raised by annexation of Bosnia. Since then, having received from M. Cambon full text of your reply to German Ambassador, he has instructed French Ambassador at Berlin that the French Government concur with His Majesty's Government in considering that those other questions must be settled preliminary to accepting the Austrian application.⁽²⁾

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 741-2, No. 771, repeated to Sir F. Bertie.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 739, No. 768.]

No. 784.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 11599/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 27, 1909.

Tel. (No. 416.)

D. 5.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 170.⁽¹⁾

I approve your language. You will see from Sir F. Cartwright's tel[egram]s Nos. 87, 88 and 89⁽²⁾ that Baron Aehrenthal in his communication to Sir F. Cartwright contemplated that the Austro-Turkish Protocol should be endorsed by a Conference.

Repeated to Rome, No. 167, Vienna, No. 172, Berlin, No. 181, Belgrade, No. 114, March 27, 1909.

⁽¹⁾ [*c. supra*, pp. 743-4, No. 775.]

⁽²⁾ [*c. supra*, pp. 718-9, Nos. 736-8.]

No. 785.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 11746/26/09/44A.

Vienna, March 27, 1909.

Tel. (No. 104.) Very urgent.

R. 7.50 P.M.

Baron von Aehrenthal sent for me to-day and begged me to inform you immediately that in order to prevent any misunderstanding with regard to proposed mediation of Powers at Belgrade, it will be necessary for Austria-Hungary to be reassured as to the attitude of His Majesty's Government with regard to abrogation of Article 25 of Berlin Treaty. He suggests that I should be instructed by you to give him verbal assurances that if Austria-Hungary addressed a note to His Majesty's Government, asking for abrogation of Article 25, he can make sure of receiving a favourable reply without reserves. Should this assurance be given, he undertakes on his side to delay asking for abrogation of above-mentioned Article till the mediation of the Powers at Belgrade has either succeeded or failed. He has every reason to believe that Serbia is ready to accept amended text of assurances as explained in my telegram No. 99.⁽¹⁾ Baron von Aehrenthal explains his reasons for asking for these assurances as follows: Should all peaceful means unfortunately fail to settle Servian crisis, and should war ensue, he must make sure that in that event His Majesty's Government will not keep annexation question open indefinitely until end of war. This would delay and complicate payment of indemnity to Turkey.

Baron von Aehrenthal read to me a telegram from Count Metternich reporting more or less substance of your telegram No. 163⁽²⁾ to me, and I thereupon explained to him your reasons for making reservations with regard to abrogation of Article 25, and I pointed out that they were not inspired by any hostile feeling towards Austria. I think that he suspected that we were annoyed at manner of German demand, and therefore suggested you should, as a sign of good-will, and in order to close a long-contested question, volunteer to give him the assurances he asks for directly through me verbally but officially.

Assurances that Austria will raise no opposition to alteration of Article 29 have been given to Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs by the Austrian Ambassador at Rome.

Baron von Aehrenthal impressed on me urgent necessity of obtaining reply on this matter without delay, and hopes to have it by to-morrow evening, as unless he gets the assurances he asks for I think he will consider mediation scheme has failed, and that he will be compelled to address direct note to the Servian Government.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 742-3, No. 773.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 743, No. 774.]

No. 786.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 11746/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 27, 1909.

Tel. (No. 169.)

D. 11.20 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 104.⁽¹⁾

After Serbia has written the note in the terms agreed and Austria has accepted it as satisfactory we shall be prepared to assent without reserves to the abrogation of Art[icle] 25 of Treaty of Berlin, if Baron d'Aehrenthal asks for it.

Should Serbia refuse to send the note which we have agreed to join in recommending we should also be prepared to assent to abrogation of Art[icle] 25 if, as I understand is the case, all the other Treaty Powers are prepared to do the same.

On the understanding therefore that the Servian note in the agreed terms will be received favourably as being satisfactory you can give the verbal assurances for which B[aron] d'Aehrenthal asks, on the undertaking that he will not ask for abrogation until the mediation of the Powers has either succeeded or failed. You should in doing so explain our view as expressed in this telegram.

Our assent is also conditional upon the alteration of Art[icle] 29 being settled to the satisfaction of Italy, which I understand from your tel[egram] and from Austrian Ambassador here is being done.

Repeated to Paris, No. 242, Rome, No. 165, St. Petersburg, No. 418.

(¹) [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

No. 787.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 12044/26/09/44.

(No. 84.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 27, 1909.

Count Metternich told me to-day that the German Government met us in a desire and an endeavour to bring about a peaceful solution. This was the purpose which the German proposal for recognition of the annexation of Bosnia was intended to serve, and it had been accepted in that sense by the Russian Government. It was intended to be a basis for the "démarche" at Belgrade, and to prevent Serbia from replying evasively by saying that she could not recognise the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina so long as recognition by the Powers remained doubtful. For this reason our answer to the German request had not been to the point.

The Servian question consisted in the renunciation of Servian aspirations in a manner which would guarantee peace on the Austrian frontier, and prove that Serbia would desist from provocation and menace, and would proceed to disarm. This object would, it was thought, be facilitated by the German proposal. If we believed we could obtain it in another way, and succeeded, Germany would rejoice in our success. But if we did not succeed, and the method suggested by Germany with peaceful intentions was rejected, then Germany would decline any responsibility with regard to further events, and the attitude of Austria towards Serbia would not depend upon the recognition by the Powers of annexation, but merely on whether Serbia made it clear that the guarantees which Austria demanded for tranquillity on her frontier, both now and as far as could reasonably be seen in the future, would be forthcoming. If Austria did proceed against her unruly and clamorous neighbour, Serbia had hardly any claim for the recognition of her susceptibilities, considering her attitude and her evasive and insincere answer to Austria, given in spite of the advice of the Powers.

Prince Bülow thought it was erroneous to suppose that the German request had been made under pressure of an ultimatum from Austria to Serbia. The German

proposal was intended solely to facilitate a "démarche" at Belgrade, and the eventual action of Austria depended on Serbia and not upon how the German request was received by the Powers.

Germany left it to us to say whether we would take any further action as regards the German proposal. It had met with a friendly reception from other Powers. Italy had made a reservation, but would waive it if Austria renewed her promise to renounce the provisions of Article 29, which limited the sovereignty of Montenegro. France was ready to accept the proposal without reserve, although she wished a declaration concerning annexation to be demanded only when there was consent on Austria's part about the "démarche" at Belgrade. France, therefore, was under the same misapprehension as we had been, and that would be explained in Paris. In any case, the French answer was far more responsive, and the condition stipulated for was put at the end and not at the beginning of her reply, as ours had been.⁽¹⁾

I told Count Metternich that, for the moment, I had nothing more to say. We were, I hoped, on the point of an agreement with Baron Aehrenthal as to the terms of a Servian Note. If the Powers could induce Serbia to send this Note without modification, and Austria gave a conciliatory reply, the whole question might be settled together. Of course, if Serbia refused to draw up the Note, or insisted upon altering its terms, the situation would be changed. I could not accept any responsibility for what might happen after that. I should regard the conditions under which I had felt unable to accept the German request as having been altered, and I should reconsider the position.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(1) [*v. supra*, p. 739, No. 768.]

No. 788.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 12136/26/09/44.

(No. 47.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 27, 1909.

Count Mensdorff came to tell me to-day that Baron Aehrenthal was in communication with M. Tittoni about the modification of Article 29, and hoped to arrange that satisfactorily very soon.

He then gave me the substance of a telegram he had received stating Baron Aehrenthal's views about the wording of the proposed Servian Note and his reasons for them. This corresponded with what I had already heard from you.⁽¹⁾

I told Count Mensdorff the substance of what I was instructing you to say to Baron Aehrenthal: agreeing to the terms of the proposed Note on the understanding that it would meet with a conciliatory reception at Vienna if the Powers induced Serbia to draw it up precisely in the terms agreed upon.

Count Mensdorff expressed appreciation of the part we had taken to promote a settlement.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

(1) [*v. supra*, pp. 744-5, No. 776.]

[*ED. NOTE.*—On the 25th March Crown Prince George of Serbia addressed a letter to the Prime Minister (M. Novaković), renouncing his right of succession to the throne, on the ground of accusations unjustly brought against him in connexion with the death (17th March) of one of his servants. (*v. supra*, p. 742, No. 772.) On the 27th King Peter held a council which requested the Crown Prince to withdraw his resignation. As he refused to do this, his resignation was recorded in a Protocol, his younger brother, Prince Alexander, being proclaimed the heir at the same time. This was submitted to the Skupshtina and published on the 28th March.]

No. 789.

(a.)

Count Mensdorff to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾*Austro-Hungarian Embassy,
18, Belgrave Square, S.W.,**March 28, 1909. 2 A.M.*

Dear Sir Edward,

I have just received Baron Aehrenthal's telegram, in which he explains that if he does not receive on Sunday or at the latest on Monday an assurance—if only verbal—about your assent to the abrogation of Article 25, he would be obliged to consider our negotiations concerning your mediation as broken off. He could not wait any longer, because as you know our provisional commercial treaty with Servia expires on March the 31st and our Government would be obliged to address a communication to Servia at the latest on Tuesday the 30th about our customs relations.

I have no doubt Sir F. Cartwright explained fully the situation to you, but in Baron Aehrenthal's telegram to me I see that certain points are raised which are perhaps not entirely correct by the answer you kindly communicated to me by telephone.

I should be very glad if I could have an opportunity to [see] you some time tomorrow, if you are in town at any moment of the day. If this is impossible, I shall call on Hardinge, as I presume you have given him authority to speak in your name.

I hope this is the final stage of the negotiations and that a complete settlement will soon be arrived at and Foreign Secretaries and Ambassadors not obliged to sit up till this time of night.

Y[our]s very sincerely,

ALBERT MENSITORFF.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 54.]

(b.)

Memorandum by Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

This from Mensdorff.

I have said I shall be back at 10 P.M. this evening, that you can give further explanation but that I cannot go further than I have gone in my telegram to Cartwright⁽²⁾ without consulting the Cabinet and have said my last word.

E. G.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 54.]⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 750. No. 786.]

No. 790.

*Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.**St. Petersburg, March 28, 1909.*

F.O. 11756/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 175.)

D. 2 P.M.

R. 3 P.M.

My telegram No. 171.⁽¹⁾

M. Isvolsky is telegraphing to Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London that he is ready to accept Declaration which may be arranged at Vienna. He points out, however, that there is no longer any mention of a promise on the part of Austria not to attack Servia if the latter follows the advice of the Powers. He thinks such a promise essential for Servia and for the Powers, and that without it it will be impossible

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

to obtain the consent of Serbia to the Declaration as to disarmament, and he thinks when the Powers take their steps at Belgrade they should make known this promise as well as that in point 3⁽²⁾ to the Servian Government in some form or another.

As to the demand of Baron d'Aehrenthal that Serbia should address her Declaration direct to Vienna and not in the form of a Circular, he thinks at least Serbia should inform Powers of the steps she will take.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 708, No. 721.]

No. 791.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 28, 1909.

F.O. 11755/26/09/44A.

D. 2.2 P.M.

Tel. (No. 174.)

R. 3.30 P.M.

As it was known only yesterday morning the public here have not yet realized surrender made by Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs in agreeing to annexation, and there is at present dazed (?) bewilderment as to why Russia should have made such a capitulation.⁽¹⁾ Even in society, which does not often occupy itself much with foreign politics, there is deep resentment against Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs for having taken a step so inconsistent with national dignity and national interests. In some quarters it has been spread about that England advised the step, and it is not known that the step was taken under a German menace. If this leaks out indignation will be very great indeed.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 727-9, No. 753.]

No. 792.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

Paris, March 28, 1909.

F.O. 11751/26/09/44A.

D. 4.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 49.)

R. 5 P.M.

Near East.

Minister for Foreign Affairs being absent for the day from Paris, I have seen Political Director. I communicated to him final text of Austrian proposal for a Declaration from the Servian Government⁽¹⁾ and the text of suggested preface to that Declaration, as recorded in your telegram No. 167 to Vienna of yesterday.⁽²⁾ He answered for the concurrence of Minister for Foreign Affairs, and undertook to telegraph the requisite instructions to French Ambassador at Vienna and French Minister at Belgrade.

Political Director also answered for the concurrence of Minister for Foreign Affairs in your views as recorded in your telegram No. 169 of last night⁽³⁾ to His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna in reply to his very urgent telegram No. 104 of yesterday.⁽⁴⁾ reporting the assurances required by Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs regarding abrogation of Article 25 of Treaty of Berlin, both of which I read to him, and of which he took notes. He said that requisite instructions would be telegraphed to French Representatives at Vienna, St. Petersburg and Rome.

Political Director said that he supposed that it would be open to Servian Government to make to all Berlin Treaty Powers the same Declaration as they are to make to Austria. It might be more palatable to them to do so than to have to make it to Austria only.

(¹) [*v. supra*, pp. 747-8, No. 782.]

(²) [*v. supra*, pp. 746-7, No. 781.]

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 750, No. 786.]

(⁴) [*v. supra*, p. 749, No. 785.]

No. 793.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 28, 1909.

F.O. 11747/26/09/44A.

D. 7:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 105.)

R. 9:50 P.M.

I informed Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs this morning that His Majesty's Government accepted the text of Servian note to Austria as finally arranged between us. His Excellency expressed himself as highly gratified, and repeated to me the assurances he has so often given that Austria-Hungary has no hostile intentions against Servia, and would not attack her if she disarmed. Similar assurances have already been given to French and Italian Ambassadors, but Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs will, at my request, visit French Ambassador this afternoon, who is ill in bed, to repeat them.

I have advised Russian and Italian Representatives here to obtain repetition of similar assurances. I also recommended my (?) colleagues to obtain from Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs the information with regard to point 3 of my telegram No. 82.⁽¹⁾

(Sent to Belgrade.)

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 707-8, No. 721.]

No. 794.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 28, 1909.

F.O. 11748/26/09/44A.

D. 7:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 106.)

R. 9:50 P.M.

Your telegram No. 169.⁽¹⁾

I received this morning and instantly communicated to Baron von Aehrenthal the substance of your above-mentioned telegram. He expressed his great satisfaction at receiving the news that His Majesty's Government consent, under conditions which were acceptable to Austria, to the abrogation of Article 25.

His Excellency gave me assurances that he would not ask for abolition of Article in question until mediation at Belgrade had either succeeded or failed.

As soon as I left, Baron von Aehrenthal proceeded at once to see the Emperor, and this afternoon I saw His Excellency again, who informed me that His Imperial Majesty was much relieved at the prospect of a peaceful settlement of the present crisis, and very grateful to you for having contributed to bring this about.

Repeated to Paris, No. 245, Rome, No. 169, St. Petersburg, No. 424. March 29, 1909.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 750, No. 786.]

No. 795.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 28, 1909.

F.O. 11749/26/09/44A.

D. 7:30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 107.)

R. 9:50 P.M.

Montenegro.⁽¹⁾

Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs told me to-day that he had arranged with the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs formula for alteration to be made in Article 29 of Treaty of Berlin.

⁽¹⁾ [For the negotiations with reference to Montenegro, *v. Mr. A. Parker's Memorandum, infra*, pp. 819-23, App. II.]

I gathered, from what his Excellency said to me, that, as soon as Servian crisis is over, he would like Prince of Montenegro to express to the Austrian Minister at Cetinje his desire to pursue a friendly policy towards this country, and simultaneously express such wishes as he may have with regard to alteration of Article 29, or other matters.

From Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs' manner I think that he would not object if Italy took the leading part in mediating between Montenegro and Austria.

No. 796.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 28, 1909.

F.O. 11757/26/09/44A.

D. 8.7 P.M.

Tel. (No. 176.)

R. 10 P.M.

I have given M. Isvolsky final text of Declaration to be made by Servia,⁽¹⁾ and have also given him a Memorandum recording the verbal assurances and explanations which Baron von Aehrenthal has given in regard to point 3,⁽²⁾ and the pacific intentions of Austria. He asked how we stood now in respect to the abrogation of Article 25. I read him the substance of your telegram No. 169⁽³⁾ to Sir F. Cartwright. He remarked even if steps to be taken at Belgrade were to fail, we still consented to abrogation.

He will telegraph to Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Vienna to ascertain whether Baron von Aehrenthal has given assurances you have received.

Resentment against M. Isvolsky is wide-spread in every circle of the public so far as I have been able to ascertain, as it is considered that he has inflicted on Russia the greatest humiliation possible. If Austria were now to attack Servia I would not by any means answer for the public not forcing the Government to afford Servia active aid. If the Servian Government become aware of the feeling here, it may be that they will not accept Declaration as it stands.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 747-8, No. 782.]

⁽²⁾ [*r. supra*, p. 738, No. 766, p. 744, No. 776, p. 746, No. 780, and p. 754, No. 793.]

⁽³⁾ [*r. supra*, p. 750, No. 786.]

No. 797.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 12355/26/09/44A.

(No. 80.) Confidential.

Rome, D. March 28, 1909.

Sir,

R. April 1, 1909.

I have the honour to report that on receipt of your telegram No. 161⁽¹⁾ I lost no time in inviting the Italian Government to accept the text of the note to be presented by Servia to the Austro-Hungarian Government, as finally agreed upon between the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs and His Majesty's Ambassador at Vienna. Signor Tittoni, after perusing it, undertook to send instructions immediately to the Italian representative at Belgrade to support His Majesty's Minister and his colleagues in urging the Servian Government to accept it. I was careful to inform him that it must be accepted verbatim and that no further modifications were possible.

He was, I inferred, a little regretful that he had been so precipitate in agreeing to the request of the German Ambassador that Italy should promise to agree to the abolition of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, if invited to by Austria-Hungary, as he said that Count Lutzow, the Austrian Ambassador, whom he had invariably found very straightforward even when his Government had not been so, had admitted to him that, though he gave a general support to the proposal of the German Ambassador, he had not received any instructions from Vienna to do so, and there was, Signor Tittoni said, no direct evidence that Germany was acting at the suggestion of the Austro-Hungarian Government.

⁽¹⁾ [*r. supra*, pp. 747-8, No. 782.]

He has however, in conversation with the French Ambassador, endeavoured to convince him, as he endeavoured to convince me, that he has taken up practically the same position as you had done, and had been remarkably firm in posing as a condition of his assent, the necessary modification of article 29.

He is still awaiting written assurances on this subject from the Austrian Government, but he said he was given to understand they would be forthcoming, and verbally he had received the most ample assurances.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

No. 798.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 11788/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 29, 1909.

Tel. (No. 115.)

D. 12.20 P.M.

I understand that the R[epresentatives] of France, Russia and Italy have received instr[uctio]ns to cooperate with you in advising the acceptance by the Servian Gov[ernmen]t of the proposed note. It is desirable that there should be no delay.

You may emphasise the pacific assurances repeated to Sir F. Cartwright as reported in his tel[egram] No. 105 of yesterday.⁽¹⁾

You may suggest to the Min[iste]r for F[oreign] A[ffairs] that, as we have been taking the lead in these mediatory proposals, the Servian Min[iste]r at Vienna should show to Sir F. Cartwright the text of the note before he hands it to B[aro]n d'Aehrenthal and that the Minister should communicate copies of the note to the British, Russian, French and Italian Ambassadors.

Repeated to Vienna, No. 178, St. Petersburg, No. 421, Berlin, No. 188.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 754, No. 793.]

No. 799.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 11757/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 29, 1909.

Tel. (No. 422.)

D. 12.45 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 176.⁽¹⁾

If the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t were not to accept the Servian note as satisfactory our hands would be free as to recognising the annexation.

This condition ensures a pacific reply from the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t. Our attitude as regards the abrogation of Art[icle] 25 remains the same as it has been throughout.

Our recognition has throughout been conditional upon the terms of Servian note being agreed upon with Austria and being received by Austria as satisfactory, there is a wide difference between this and a promise to recognize before either of these conditions were assured. Now that terms of note are agreed by us all, including Russia, we shall of course not refuse recognition if Servia refuses to take our advice.

Confidential.

It may interest you to know that on Saturday the Russian Chargé d'Affaires communicated a tel[egram] from M. Isvolsky urging upon us the acceptance of the Austrian text and a simultaneous promise to abrogate Art[icle] 25 as the only possible means of avoiding an attack by Austria upon Servia.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 755, No. 796.]

No. 800.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Reilly.

F.O. 11743/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 29, 1909.

Tel. (No. 12.)

D. 10.30 P.M.

Y[ou]r tel[egram] No. 13.⁽¹⁾

You may inform the Prince that we have throughout made it a condition that Article 29 should be modified in favour of Montenegro and that Austria has given assurances in the sense desired (see Sir R. Rodd's Tel[egram] No. 55⁽²⁾ and Sir F. Cartwright's tel[egram] No. 94⁽³⁾ and to him No. 147,⁽⁴⁾ repeated to you).

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 723, No. 746.]⁽²⁾ [Not reproduced.]⁽⁴⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 720, No. 741.]

No. 801.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 12351/26/09/44A.

(No. 202.)

St. Petersburg, D. March 29, 1909.

Sir,

R. April 1, 1909.

It was only on the morning of the 27th instant that the general public became aware that the Russian Government had consented, if asked by Austria-Hungary, to the unconditional abrogation of Article 25 of the Berlin Treaty, or, in other words, to recognize the annexation by Austria-Hungary of Bosnia and Herzegovina.⁽²⁾ It had always been understood that the Russian Government were, in conjunction with the Governments of Great Britain and of France, maintaining the attitude, which had been announced on more than one occasion, both officially and publicly, that the modification of an international Treaty by Austria-Hungary on her own initiative, as well as the arbitrary infractions of the same Treaty by Bulgaria, would not be recognised until the matter had been discussed and examined by all the Signatory Powers in conjunction with the compensations due to other states whose interests had been directly or indirectly affected by the acts of last autumn. It was therefore with surprise and indeed with bewildered consternation that the public learnt that the Russian Government, who were supposed to have under their especial care the interests of the smaller Balkan States, and whose influence in the Balkan Peninsula had been endangered, had consented suddenly to abandon the position which they had hitherto assumed and to sanction the act which Austria-Hungary had executed some months ago. It was considered not only in the press but also, so far as I have been able to observe and ascertain, in all classes of society, that Russia had suffered a deep humiliation, and had renounced the traditional part which she had hitherto played in South East Europe and in the prosecution of which she had made so great sacrifices in the past. Even among those who take but little interest in foreign affairs, and who do not feel much sympathy for the smaller Balkan States, whom they regard as troublesome and ungrateful younger brethren, there was a feeling of bitter resentment that, at a most critical moment for two of the minor Slav States, their natural protector had abandoned them to the mercy of a German Power; and that Russia had consented, without making any reservations in favour of those who had looked to her for assistance, if not material, in any case moral and diplomatic, to give her seal to an act which had been committed by Austria-Hungary to the detriment of Slav interests. I have been assured by those who have witnessed many various phases in the recent history of

⁽¹⁾ [Printed in Lord Grey: *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 188-9.]⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 727-9, No. 753.]

Russia that there has never previously been a moment when the country has undergone such humiliation; and though Russia has had her troubles and trials, both external and internal, and has suffered defeats in the field, she has never had, for apparently no valid cause, to submit to the dictation of a foreign Power.

As I am sending this despatch by post I do not like to enter into fuller details or to draw certain consequences which may possibly follow from the step which the Russian Government have taken. I will only notice that voices are being raised whether the ally and the friend of Russia have proved sufficiently strong supporters at the hour of need. The "Golos Pravdy," the organ of the Octobrist party, has given expression to these doubts in no uncertain tones, and has drawn the attention of its readers to the fact that the combination of the three Powers was too weak to withstand the first shock which is sustained from the Central Powers. It is considered out of the question that Russia could have taken the recent step without previous consultation with her ally and her friend: and indeed it has been spread about that it was on the advice of Great Britain that the step was taken. When this version has come to my ears, I have naturally given it a direct denial. The whole truth will doubtless gradually be known, but when it is known it is hardly likely to mitigate the feeling of humiliation which at present is weighing so heavily on the public mind.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTES.

It is not the right deduction to say that the Triple Entente was too weak to resist the Central Powers in this matter. It was not worth their while to do so. If it had been, we could have prevented war.

Russian public opinion will take a calmer view on reflection.

L. M.

This is true and it is also true that M. Isvolsky did not give either us or France the chance of saying whether we should help him to make better terms.

E. G.

No. 802.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 12809/26/09/44A.

(No. 49.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. March 29, 1909.

R. April 5, 1909.

My telegram No. 105 of yesterday's date⁽¹⁾ will have informed you that all the difficulties have been surmounted and that the Austro-Hungarian Government accept the mediation of Great Britain, France, Russia, and Italy at Belgrade to bring about a peaceful solution of the Austro-Servian crisis. The moment seems to me therefore opportune to review as briefly as possible the causes which have led to this mediation, and also to draw your attention to the difficulties which have had to be overcome before that mediation could be effectively applied.

As you are aware on the 14th instant the Servian Government replied to a Note which had been addressed to them by the Austro-Hungarian Government in a tone which was considered here to be entirely unsatisfactory and to be evidence of a desire on the part of the Servian Government rather to aggravate than to ameliorate the relations which are growing daily more strained between this country and Servia.⁽²⁾ It is hardly worth while to enter now into a discussion as to the technical merits of the dispute, but it will be sufficient to call to your mind the fact that after the receipt of the above-mentioned Servian Note in Vienna the danger that the quarrel between

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 754, No. 793.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 679-80, No. 683.]

the two countries would have eventually to be settled by war became every moment more imminent. Although the Austro-Hungarian Government, on receipt of the Servian Note, did not immediately order a mobilisation of their army, yet they called up sufficient reserves to so strengthen their forces on the Servian frontier as to clearly intimate their intention that if Serbia did not abandon her hostile attitude towards this country, such measures would have to be taken as would render her in future powerless to be a source of anxiety to the Dual Monarchy. It was at this critical moment that the idea occurred to you that it might be possible for Great Britain to successfully offer her mediation—with the support of Russia, France and Italy—to bring about a peaceful and honourable settlement between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, and so put an end to the misunderstandings which for so long have disturbed the relations between those two countries.

In order that you may appreciate the difficulties which lay in the way of carrying out your idea of offering to mediate between Austria-Hungary and Serbia, I think it well to sum up as concisely as possible the views held here with regard to the recent attitude of the Powers and to the causes which have led to the present crisis. It is now generally acknowledged here that Baron von Aehrenthal committed a mistake in proclaiming the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina before he had obtained the consent of the Powers to do so, but public opinion in Austria-Hungary is convinced that the fault committed was a purely technical one, and that as soon as Turkey had been indemnified for her loss of suzerainty over the two Provinces, the breach in the Treaty of Berlin had been honourably mended, and that this fact should have been recognised without loss of time by all the Powers. Throughout this long crisis Great Britain and Russia have declared that they were defending the sacredness of Treaties but here in Austria-Hungary it has been impossible to persuade the official world and the general public to believe that our motives were really disinterested, and no arguments I have been able to use seemed to have had any effect in altering this view of our attitude. To all I could say the answer has always been that it was beyond dispute that in order to avoid trouble to ourselves by the premature raising of the Dardanelles question we had reluctantly sold our support to Russia to uphold pretensions and aspirations on the part of Serbia which none of the Powers had in any way encouraged at or since the Berlin Congress, and which Russia herself had repudiated at the Buchlau meeting a few weeks before the annexation of the two Provinces was proclaimed. For Austrians, therefore, the British Government were actuated in opposing Austria-Hungary, not really by high moral grounds but by those of purely political convenience; in other words, in refusing to recognise the Austro-Turkish Protocol it was said here that we were in a way trying to blackmail Austria-Hungary in order thereby to save the prestige of Monsieur Isvolsky by attempting to obtain concessions for Serbia which it was neither reasonable nor fair to expect Austria-Hungary to grant to that country. This view of the case rendered the Austro-Hungarian Government and the Austrian public all the more suspicious of us when we came forward and offered our mediation in Belgrade to settle the crisis, and I can assure you that it was no easy matter to win over the confidence of Baron von Aehrenthal and to make him believe that Russia and ourselves were now sincerely desirous of bringing about a prompt and final settlement of the Servian difficulty. It need hardly be said that I had also to contend with the jealousy of Germany at seeing England taking the lead in Vienna even though this was done in order to secure the peace of Europe, a peace which I believe Germany is as desirous as ourselves to wish to maintain for the present. This jealousy may perhaps have been the principal cause which prompted Prince Bülow to send his kind of ultimatum to Russia while the negotiations were going on between Baron von Aehrenthal and myself, in order to extort from Russia a promise that she would recognise without raising any further difficulties the abrogation of Article XXV of the Treaty of Berlin.

If there were many difficulties which seemed to render a successful conclusion of the negotiations almost impossible, there were some factors which told in a

contrary direction. Foremost amongst these was the pacific disposition of the Emperor Franz Joseph: in spite of all the pressure which could be brought to bear upon His Majesty by his military advisers, the Emperor stood firm for peace if it could be maintained without loss of honour, and I feel convinced that it is due to His Majesty's influence more than to any other cause that all the difficulties which at moments seemed to imperil the negotiations were finally overcome and a formula found which both Austria-Hungary and Serbia could honourably accept. I think I am right in saying that Baron von Aehrenthal was himself sincerely in favour of a pacific solution of the crisis, and in the long and repeated interviews which I have had with him during the last ten days, I have felt that he was really desirous of finding such a formula as public opinion would allow him to accept and which it would be possible for Serbia to do likewise without humiliation to herself. What motives may have actuated Baron von Aehrenthal to give a helping hand to these negotiations—which have been carried through with a rapidity not usually known in Austro-Hungarian diplomacy—is perhaps difficult to ascertain, but I believe that he felt that it was in his own personal interest to solve the crisis peacefully for should war have ensued from it, he would have had to encounter the displeasure of the Emperor and of public opinion to which the idea of a war for such issues was highly unattractive and even repugnant. I am convinced that Baron von Aehrenthal fully realised that if hostilities should unfortunately have broken out, he could not long have remained in his position as Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

At the last moment, as you are aware, the negotiations nearly broke down because a misunderstanding arose as to the exact meaning of the reply you gave to Count Metternich when he enquired whether His Majesty's Government were prepared to agree to the abrogation of Article XXV of the Berlin Treaty. It would appear as if the German Government inspired Baron von Aehrenthal to believe that your desire was to avoid giving a clear reply to the question put to you, so that you should be able to continue to worry Austria-Hungary over the matter of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The belief that this was your intention and that the final recognition of the Austro-Turkish Protocol was to be still further delayed, caused the greatest exasperation here against Great Britain and almost rendered futile the labour of the past ten days which had just brought about a final understanding as to the formula for the assurances which Serbia should be recommended by the Powers to give to the Austro-Hungarian Government. There was no time for hesitation and after a long interview which I had with Baron von Aehrenthal on the afternoon of the 27th instant, I sent you my urgent telegram No. 104⁽³⁾ explaining to you the situation and pointing out that the Austro-Hungarian Government would not allow the mediation of the Powers to be undertaken unless assurances were previously given that His Majesty's Government abandoned the intention of offering any further opposition to the abrogation of Article XXV of the Treaty of Berlin. I received yesterday morning your telegram No. 169⁽⁴⁾ authorising me to give the Austro-Hungarian Government the assurances they had asked for, and I immediately saw Baron von Aehrenthal to communicate this message to him. After my interview with him, His Excellency at once proceeded to Schönbrunn to confer with the Emperor. On Baron von Aehrenthal's return to town I saw him again and he then informed me, as reported in my telegram No. 105,⁽⁵⁾ that the Austro-Hungarian Government thankfully accepted the intervention of Great Britain, France, Russia and Italy to obtain satisfactory assurances from the Servian Government by which the necessity of war would be avoided.

In conclusion I may add that Herr von Tschirschky, the German Ambassador, called this morning at His Majesty's Embassy to offer me his congratulations on what he hoped will prove to be the peaceful solution of the Servian crisis, and he at the same time remarked that Germany had rendered Great Britain a great service in

(³) [*v. supra*, p. 749, No. 785.]

(⁴) [*v. supra*, p. 750, No. 786.]

(⁵) [*v. supra*, p. 754, No. 793.]

her attempts at mediation by persuading Russia to withdraw all opposition on her part to the abrogation of Article XXV of the Treaty of Berlin. I thought it better to avoid entering into a heated discussion with the Ambassador on this matter.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

[*ED. NOTE.*—*v. Conrad: Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, Wien (1921), I, p. 162. On March 29, mobilisation against Serbia and Montenegro was decided on in a Ministerial Council at which Baron von Aehrenthal presided, who, says Conrad, "rechnete jetzt mit dem Kriege." It may be mentioned here that the British War Office states to the Editors that "there were no mobilization measures or precautionary measures taken by the (British) War Office during the Bosnian crisis." *v. also supra*, p. 693, *Ed. note*, p. 706, *Ed. note*, and *infra*, p. 765, No. 809, *note*.]

No. 803.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 12476/26/09/44A.

(No. 50.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. March 29, 1909.

R. April 2, 1909.

I have the honour to transmit herewith translation of an Article which appeared in this morning's issue of the "Sonn und Montags-Zeitung"⁽¹⁾ by the pen of "Austriacus":—a writer, who although his pseudonym has hitherto baffled all efforts of detection, has acquired a considerable reputation for his weekly review of Foreign Affairs.

In the present Article he deduces two important lessons from the Balkan crisis which, in his opinion, should be committed to memory by Austria-Hungary on the one hand and the Powers on the other. On the former is imposed the task of realizing that she has incurred universal hostility and can only count in future on the friendship of Germany, while to the latter is addressed a solemn warning that Austria-Hungary is not the decaying Empire they imagined but a great military Power who in case of necessity would be in the position to defend her interests with the sword.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 804.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 12052/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 116.)

Foreign Office, March 30, 1909.

D. 12.10 P.M.

Your tel[egram] No. 30.⁽¹⁾

Your language and mode of procedure approved.

Any further delay is very undesirable.

If the German Minister has received no instr[uctio]ns when you receive this telegram you should invite your Russian, French and Italian colleagues to act with you at once.

Repeated to Berlin No. 135, St. Petersburg No. 428, Vienna No. 175. March 30, 1909.

(¹) [This telegram, which is not reproduced, was sent in reply to Sir E. Grey's telegrams Nos. 113 and 115 (*supra*, p. 746, No. 780, and p. 756, No. 798). It states that the French, Italian and Russian representatives had received instructions in agreement with those sent to Mr. Whitehead. They were waiting to make representation to the Servian Government until the next day, in the expectation that the German Minister would also have received his instructions by then. The telegram further outlined the procedure proposed in making the representation.]

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, March 30, 1909.

F.O. 12209/26/09/44A.

D. 3 P.M.

Tel. (No. 31.)

R. 5.30 P.M.

We made the proposed collective representation to Servian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] at 11 this morning. German Minister joined us, although without instructions.

We presented an *aide-mémoire* stating that Ministers of the five Powers invited the Servian Gov[ernmen]t most urgently to address the desired note to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t, *verbatim* and with as little delay as possible. Then followed the text and preamble. Concluding paragraph of the *aide-mémoire* stated that Ministers of G[rea]t Britain, France, Italy and Russia were authorised to inform the Servian Gov[ernmen]t of the assurances given by the Austrian M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] to the representatives of those Powers in Vienna, including point 3 of Sir F. Cartwright's telegram No. 82.⁽¹⁾

We all urged most strongly that note should be presented at once, and without the slightest modification, and Italian Minister made, by order of his Gov[ernmen]t, a statement similar to that in last paragraph of your telegram No. 113.⁽²⁾

M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] replied that a Cabinet Council under Presidency of the King would be held at five this afternoon, and that he would inform us this evening whether the Servian Gov[ernmen]t accepted our advice as he had little doubt they would. In that case note would be telegraphed to Vienna early tomorrow.

I saw M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] alone after my colleagues had left, and let him write down a translation of second half of first paragraph and of last paragraph of your telegram No. 113. I also told him that you had suggested in view of lead taken by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in mediatory action that Servian Minister at Vienna might perhaps find it useful to consult Sir F. Cartwright before handing in the note, and that it would be desirable for him to give copies of it afterwards to other Ambassadors at Vienna. M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] promised to act on this suggestion.

As I was leaving H[is] E[xc]cellency begged me to express to you his personal gratitude for friendly endeavours of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]. A similar message on the part of the Servian Gov[ernmen]t will I think follow.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 708, No. 721.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 746, No. 780.]

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 30, 1909.

F.O. 12211/26/09/44A.

D. 4.15 P.M.

Tel. (No. 178.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 422.⁽¹⁾

French Ambassador tells me that he had gathered yesterday from M. Isvolsky, though the latter did not expressly say so, that in the event of mediation at Belgrade failing to obtain a pacific solution, Russian Government would consider that they were freed from undertaking they have given to the German Government as to abrogation of Article 25, and that he expects that your condition as to the consent of all the Powers being necessary would then become operative.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 756, No. 799.]

Personally, I should doubt whether the Russian Government could maintain that view, as their consent was quite unconditional and unreserved; I do not propose to discuss this point with M. Isvolsky, so as not to complicate matters by foreseeing eventualities which very possibly will not arise. He is evidently seeking for some means of extricating himself later from the position in which he has placed himself, and which has aroused so much opposition to him.

At the same time, as I am pretty sure to be questioned later on by M. Isvolsky as to our attitude in regard to abrogation, I should be glad to know if I would be correct in telling him that our consent to abrogate will be accorded—

1. If Servia accepts the note, etc.;
2. If she refuses; and
3. If Article 29 is modified to the satisfaction of Italy; but that solution of "other questions" mentioned in your Memorandum given to Count Metternich⁽²⁾ will not be insisted on by His Majesty's Government as a necessary condition to acceptance.

(²) [*v. supra*, p. 739, No. 768.]

No. 807.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, March 30, 1909.

F.O. 12210/26/09/44A.

D. 5'35 P.M.

Tel. (No. 43.)

R. 5'40 P.M.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs seem much astonished that no communication has been received from His Majesty's Government with reference to procedure at Belgrade for submitting to the Servian Government the form of Servian note agreed upon by the Powers.

MINUTES.

I do not think any reply is necessary to this tel[egram].

The German Min[iste]r has taken part in the repres[entatio]n at Belgrade, but if any further inquiry is made by the German Gov[ernmen]t either here or in Berlin, I think we may rightly say that the German Gov[ernmen]t had identified themselves so conspicuously with the Austrian attitude in this question that it seemed out of place to invite them to offer friendly advice to Servia to submit to that of the Powers, but that we are glad that they did so with our invitation.⁽¹⁾

C. H.

I had better see Count Metternich tomorrow and if he mentions this I can say why we did not expressly approach them and that I am glad they have joined.

E. G.

30.3.09.

(¹) [The following private letter is given here as it deals more fully with this subject:

Sir Charles Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽²⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, March 30, 1909.

I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 25th.

Last week was a momentous one from many points of view, and its events will probably leave a permanent mark in the history of Europe for some years to come.

It has been a most difficult task for us here to follow the workings of Isvolsky's mind, and to keep in touch with him on the Servian question, so as to ensure its peaceful solution. His views are apparently diametrically opposed to ours, since he rejected our note as practically inadmissible, while the modifications which he suggested to the Austrian note were such as we should have hesitated to put forward. We had already considered the desirability of modifying the Austrian text; but Isvolsky left in it some of the phrases to which we most strongly objected. We decided, however, that it would be absurd for us to be more royalist than the King, so we accepted his modifications "en bloc," and the note has thus been finally accepted by Austria. We could not help feeling, however, that the modifications which he suggested in paragraph one and which we supported to the utmost of our ability at Vienna, stood but little chance of being

(²) [Carnock MSS.]

No. 808.

*Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.**Belgrade, March 30, 1909.*

F.O. 12214/26/09/44A.

D. 9.45 P.M.

Tel. (No. 32.)

R. 10.30 P.M.

My immediately preceding telegram.⁽¹⁾

I have just received a private letter from the Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, stating that Servian Government have accepted formula we suggested

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 762. No. 805.]

accepted by Aehrenthal, in view of the fact—as we learned afterwards from Cartwright—that Isvolsky had already promised Aehrenthal to accept the Austrian text of paragraph one, if we would agree to it. Naturally, Aehrenthal, fortified by Isvolsky's assurances, absolutely refused to accept the modifications which we had put forward.

Now we learn this morning that Isvolsky has, on his own initiative, and apparently without saying anything to the French or to ourselves, expressed a wish that the German Minister at Belgrade should also take part in the joint step which is to be taken to-day. We fail to understand what his idea can be in making this proposal. It seems to us to be quite unnecessary and, from a Servian point of view, objectionable, since they know perfectly well that Germany has been behind Austria in the latter's aggressive intentions towards Servia. We should have thought that the Russians would have tried to make the collective action at Belgrade as agreeable as possible to the Servians, but this they have apparently failed to do. I do not like the intrusion of Germany in this affair, as it is impossible to say whether they may not in the end create a hitch in the proceedings, although I can understand that it would give great pleasure to the Germans to dragoon a wretched lot like the Servians.

As for Isvolsky's capitulation to Russia [Germany] at the beginning of last week, it is really too deplorable! Had he given a reply such as we gave to Metternich, it would have been impossible for the Germans to base an ultimatum upon it. How right we were in the attitude which we adopted is shown by the fact that three days later Metternich came down to the Foreign Office to explain away the step which he had taken, and to say that Germany had only intended to assist the Powers in their representations at Belgrade. Fortunately we were aware that Metternich was going to make the *démarche* here which had been made at Petersburg, and we were ready for him, and purposely made our reply somewhat stiff, as we resented German interference in this matter altogether. This had the admirable effect of stiffening France, who was rather "wobbly" in her attitude.

I had heard of what they call the "Cartwright proposal," and I am rather uncomfortable at the suggestion that Cartwright gave the idea to Aehrenthal. Whether he did so or not I cannot say, but I do know that Aehrenthal has written to that effect, and has quoted Cartwright in several of his telegrams as the originator of the proposal. It is a matter which we are going to clear up; but I am holding my hand for two or three days, as I do not want to harass Cartwright with what is somewhat of a personal question, while action is still to be taken at Vienna in connection with the Servian note.

Grey showed to me your very interesting letter to him upon the future grouping of the Powers in Europe.⁽³⁾ I think there is no doubt that we have a period of great danger and stress before us. I wonder very much what the feeling in Russia will be when all these Balkan questions have temporarily subsided. Do you think that people who reflect will say to themselves: "Is it not better for us to come to terms with Germany and Austria and leave France and England alone?"—or will they be far-sighted enough to see that the loyal support which we have given them throughout this recent crisis may be of inestimable benefit to Russia if repeated at the time when she is engaged in a death struggle with Germany and Austria? My own belief is that the anti-German feeling in Russia is too strong at present to allow of any combination between Germany and Russia, and that, so long as the Emperor lives, a "drei-Kaiser-Bund" will be impossible, owing to his dislike of the Germans and of the German Emperor in particular. To prevent, however, another and more serious rebuff to Russia it will, in my opinion, be absolutely necessary to find a new Minister for Foreign Affairs, who shall be endowed with such character and qualities as Monsieur Stolypin possesses. This is, however, not an easy thing to find in Russia.

We are awaiting news from Belgrade which will, I hope, terminate this Servian crisis, which has worn us out during the last six months. I fear, however, that there are indications that it will be almost immediately followed by the Cretan question.

We are sending to you a very nice boy in Wellesley. He is a capital fellow, and I think should do well in St. Petersburg.

Y[ou]rs ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.]

(³) [*v. supra*, pp. 736-7, No. 764.]

this morning, and that Servian Minister at Vienna will present the note to Baron von Achrenthal to-morrow, 31st March.

Repeated to Paris, No. 250. St. Petersburg, No. 431, Vienna, No. 178, Rome, No. 174, Berlin, No. 137, March 31, 1909.

No. 809.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, March 31, 1909.

F.O. 12297/26/09/44A.

D. 1.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 109.)

R. 2.30 P.M.

Servian Minister has just called and given me a copy of the note which he will this afternoon personally hand over to the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs.⁽¹⁾ It coincides in every respect with the text of the formula and preamble as arranged.

Sent to Belgrade.

(¹) [According to Conrad: *Aus Meiner Dienstzeit*, Wien (1921), I, p. 163, it was not until this was delivered that Baron von Achrenthal thought that the danger of war was over. Conrad adds that he regretted the acceptance of Serbia's submission, and submitted a protest to the Emperor on April 2, *ib.* I, pp. 166-8. He quotes a letter of General Moltke's of September 14, 1909, to the same effect: *ib.* I, p. 165.]

No. 810.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, March 31, 1909.

F.O. 12305/26/09/44A.

D. 4.40 P.M.

Tel. (No. 44.) Very Confidential.

R. 5.10 P.M.

M. Kiderlen told me last night that German Minister had supported his colleagues at Belgrade at Austrian Minister's request, but without instructions from the Imperial Government. He rather regretted this firstly because the note contained no guarantee for Serbia's future conduct, and he could not shut his eyes to the possibility that through some act on the part of Serbia Austria would in spite of all be forced to take military action. He would therefore have preferred that Germany should have incurred no responsibility with regard to the note. Had he been in Baron d'Aehrenthal's place he would never have consented to a formula containing no guarantee for the future.

M. Kiderlen stated that these were merely personal opinions, but owing to his position I think it best to report them, particularly as what he said seems to indicate that Serbia should be very careful to give no possible excuse for Austrian military action.

No. 811.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

Belgrade, March 31, 1909.

F.O. 12301/26/09/44A.

D. 5 P.M.

Tel. (No. 33.)

R. 7 P.M.

Servian Minister for Foreign Affairs has just called to request me to convey to His Majesty's Government the sincere thanks of Servian Government for their friendly

attitude during the whole crisis, and especially for their recent intervention at Vienna. His Excellency added that, although Servian Government could not of course be satisfied with the result, they none the less deeply appreciated efforts which His Majesty's Government had made on their behalf.

No. 812.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir R. Rodd.

F.O. 12454/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, March 31, 1909.

Tel. (No. 176.)

D. 7.30 P.M.

You should direct M. Tittoni's attention to last paragraph of my telegram No. 169 to Sir F. Cartwright⁽¹⁾ and ask him what the present position of the question is, exactly what the conditions are upon which he is insisting and whether he has ascertained that they are satisfactory to Montenegro.

Repeated to Cetinje, No. 16.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 750, No. 786.]

No. 813.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 31, 1909.

F.O. 12303/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 179.) Most Confidential.

R. 9.30 P.M.

I had long conversation with M. Isvolsky in regard to events of the last few days. In the first place he dealt with a complaint he had against me personally. He said he had heard I had stated that answer he had given to German Ambassador here had been decided upon without consulting England and France. I told him a member of his own Ministry had asked me point-blank whether I had known of the German demand before or after the meeting of the Council of Ministers. I had replied that I had heard of it afterwards. It was true there was a lady present at the time, but I could not deny a fact which, moreover, was in most of the foreign press. He then said he had heard I had mentioned to a foreign diplomat that he had been threatened with publication of an alleged Buchlau Protocol. I told him this was not a fact. He added that same insinuation as to the threat had appeared in a telegram to "Daily Telegraph" from Vienna and in another telegram from Berlin. I replied that it was clear that I could have nothing to do with what had appeared from the above two capitals.

He said Sir F. Cartwright had suggested to Baron von Aehrenthal that the Powers should be asked to abrogate Article 25, and that Sir F. Cartwright had also stated that question of war or peace rested with Russia. He read me some telegrams from Russian Chargé d'Affaires at Vienna reporting the above. I told him that what I had received through the Foreign Office from Vienna gave no indication of Sir F. Cartwright having made such suggestions. He then read me a communication from French Government which he had received during the most delicate phase of the question between Austria and Servia, which he said indicated clearly that France would not give material support to Russia, and that, therefore, with the British Ambassador at Vienna, who he presumed reflected the views of His Majesty's Government, suggesting to Austria that Article 25 should be abrogated, and with the knowledge that Russia would not be supported by France, he had no other course open to him but to accede to the German demand, and he thought it was exceedingly

unjust that he should be accused of having deserted his two partners. What he had done, at a great sacrifice, was in the interests of peace, and he was now violently attacked all round. I told him, so far as I could see, the British press had not attacked him. I had thought, and still did think, that it would have been better if he had consulted the two friendly Governments before taking a final decision. However, it was no use going over the past; the main point was to consider the immediate future. He said that he noticed from the telegrams which he received from Russian Chargé d'Affaires in London that you were not over-pleased with his action. We then discussed general situation, which I will report in another telegram.

No. 814.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, March 31, 1909.

F.O. 12304/26/09/44A.

D. 8.10 P.M.

Tel. (No. 180.) Confidential.

R. 10 P.M.

M. Isvolsky told me there was no truth in the report that the Emperor William had written to the Emperor of Russia on the subject of the abrogation of Article 25. No pressure of that kind had been exercised. Russia had received nothing more than a temporary diplomatic check, and this was preferable to having been launched into a war which might have had disastrous consequences. The check could easily be repaired, and he considered that Austria in reality gained no serious advantages. I told him I hoped that Russia would remain faithful to her alliance and her entente, as it was more than ever important that the three countries should co-operate closely.

He agreed, and said he had succeeded in detaching Bulgaria from Austria; and he was anxious that the former country should remain in the closest relations with Russia, and, if it could be managed for Bulgaria and Servia to come to an understanding and to keep in intimate relations with Turkey, he thought a barrier could be raised against Austrian aggression. I asked him whether he intended to profit by the presence of Bulgarian Minister for Foreign Affairs here to come to any arrangement. He did not give me a direct reply, but remarked that Bulgaria was the most serious country in the Balkans. He said that he had heard that Austria was collecting troops on the Montenegrin frontier, and might possibly deal with her as she had done with Servia.

He spoke of resigning. I told him he must not think of such a step, but must play out the game to the end. He remarked that we ought to support him. I told him that as far as I could I was doing so, and that I was sure my Government would deeply regret his departure.

No. 815.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 12211/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, March 31, 1909.

Tel. (No. 437.)

D. 9 P.M.

My Tel[egram] No. 169⁽¹⁾ to Sir F. Cartwright repeated to you in my No. 418 contains a full reply to your questions.

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 750, No. 786.]

No. 816.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 12537/26/09/44.

(No. 92.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, March 31, 1909.

I told Count Metternich to-day what had passed between us and Baron Aehrenthal with regard to the abolition of Article 25, and explained to him how an agreement had been reached and on what footing the matter now stood.⁽¹⁾

He asked whether, if Austria, after receiving the Servian Note favourably, asked for immediate recognition, we should give it; or whether we should desire to be satisfied first with regard to the modification of Article 29 respecting Montenegro.

I said it would be very desirable that this matter should be settled between Austria and Italy, either before or simultaneously with the promise to recognise the abolition of Article 25. I had really left the matter in the hands of Italy, who was most directly interested, and I had not heard exactly what was passing. I assumed that what was intended was the removal of all limitations upon the sovereignty of the Montenegrins within their own territory.

Count Metternich enquired as to my view with regard to a Conference. Did I think one should take place, how should it be composed, and what ground should it cover? One method that had been suggested was a Conference of the Ambassadors at Constantinople.

I told him I assumed the Powers would wish to settle the three questions which, at one stage, had been proposed by Italy as the subject of a Conference. They would probably be content to do that now, and then would no doubt be glad of a little breathing time. As to the exact way in which these three questions should be settled, we ourselves had taken so active a part recently that I was disposed to defer to the wishes of the other Powers as to the method of settlement. I hoped that any new difficulties which arose would not raise questions between the Powers.

[I am, &c.

E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [*v. G.P. XXVI, II, pp. 733-4.*]

No. 817.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. Whitehead.

F.O. 12354/26/09/44.

Tel. (No. 118.)

Foreign Office, April 1, 1909.

D. 4.40 P.M.

I desire to convey to you the high appreciation of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] of the manner in which you have conducted the recent negotiations at Belgrade. The favourable result obtained there is due not only to the efficient way in which you executed your instructions, but to your tact and judgment in using your influence both with the Servian Gov[ernment] and your colleagues in the right direction whenever there was an opportunity.

No. 818.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 12304/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 444.)

Foreign Office, April 1, 1909.

D. 5.20 P.M.

Your tel[egrams] Nos. 179 and 180.⁽¹⁾

You can assure M. Isvolsky that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have no knowledge of the statements attributed to Sir F. Cartwright and that they have never

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra, pp. 766-7, Nos. 813-4.*]

accused him of having deserted his two partners. We fully appreciate the difficult and even critical position in which he found himself placed by Germany's imperious demand, and although we think it would have been better to have attached some conditions to the assent of Russia to the abrogation of Art[icle] 25 we entirely share his view that, under existing circ[umstanc]es, it was better to experience a temporary diplomatic check rather than to give cause for a war of which it would be impossible to foresee the consequences. We have, as I think M. Isvolsky will admit, loyally supported him throughout the recent crisis, and that support it will be our object and desire to maintain. It would be very unfortunate if he were to resign since it would be regarded as a further triumph for Germany and would encourage a repetition of her menacing procedure.

You should give M. Isvolsky a friendly message in the above sense.

No. 819.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 13315/26/09/44.

(No. 49.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 1, 1909.

Count Mensdorff came to tell me to-day that Baron Aehrenthal regarded the Servian Note⁽¹⁾ as having put an end to the differences between Austria and Servia, and as having re-established relations of good neighbourliness.

I said I was very glad to hear that the Servian Note had been received in this way. I had just heard from the Italian Chargé d'Affaires that a satisfactory arrangement had been come to with Italy about Montenegro, and it therefore seemed that every thing was now on the point of being settled.

[I am, &c.]
F. G[REY].

⁽¹⁾ [*r. supra*, pp. 747-8, No. 782, and p. 765, No. 809.]

No. 820.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

British Embassy, Vienna, April 1, 1909.

I will try and see Baron von Aehrenthal tomorrow and clear up the misunderstanding alluded to in your private telegram which reached me this morning.⁽²⁾ The facts of the case are as follows.

On Sunday the 21st of March, after a long discussion which I had with Baron von Aehrenthal, I found that it was highly improbable that the mediation scheme would come to anything unless Austria-Hungary was reassured with regard to the recognition by the Powers of the Austro-Turkish Protocol. As it seemed improbable that the Powers would feel inclined to give such official assurances as Austria-Hungary required, I asked Baron von Aehrenthal whether he would be satisfied if I could persuade you to approve of the idea that each Power individually should privately give Austria-Hungary assurances that they would raise no objection to the abrogation of Article XXV of the Berlin Treaty when the Conference should meet, it being naturally taken for granted that by that date the Servian crisis would be over. Baron von Aehrenthal replied that he could not immediately give me a definite answer as to this suggestion, but after thinking it over for a little time he said that on the whole he felt inclined to accept it as a possible solution of a difficulty. He promised to let me know his views more precisely on this matter without loss of time. On the following day I received

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

⁽²⁾ [This telegram has not been traced.]

a private letter from him containing the texts of the two formulæ which I telegraphed to you.⁽³⁾ The first was a formula for the assurances Serbia was to give, and the second a formula for the abrogation of Article XXV of the Berlin Treaty which each Power would privately undertake to support at the Conference. You replied to me that there were difficulties in the way of getting the Powers to agree to give such assurances, and I informed Baron von Aehrenthal of this. I gave him to understand that I was not yet instructed to definitely reject the idea but to point out that it was necessary to give time to the Powers to express their views with regard to it, and I added that unless assurances were obtainable from Austria-Hungary that she would allow alterations to be made in Article XXIX of the Berlin Treaty, it would be quite impossible to carry out the scheme I had suggested. Baron von Aehrenthal remarked that Austria-Hungary would raise no objections to the proposed alterations in Article XXIX. There the matter as regards the private assurances rested for a time, and no further allusion was made to them until Saturday March 27th. Meanwhile I continued with Baron von Aehrenthal the discussion of the text for the Servian formula, and nothing that Baron von Aehrenthal ever said to me led me to believe that he was under the impression that the few verbal concessions he made in the text of the formula were made in return for the promise that we would give the private assurances he had asked for. Ever since Sunday the 21st of March, I had fears that at the final moment the whole mediation scheme would break down if we did not come to an understanding with regard to the abrogation of Art. XXV, but on the receipt of Sir Arthur Nicolson's telegram No. 152,⁽⁴⁾ repeated to me, stating that Russia had given her consent to the abrogation of that Article without reserves, I became more reassured with regard to Austria-Hungary's attitude on this matter, and from Baron von Aehrenthal's silence after the middle of the week on the subject of the private assurances—which I told him were difficult to obtain—I remained under the impression that he was satisfied that both England and France would follow the example of Russia, and that therefore there was no further need of obtaining the private assurances. At the last moment the German Government evidently communicated to Baron von Aehrenthal the reply you gave to Count Metternich and pointed out that it left the attitude of His Majesty's Government as regards the abrogation of Article XXV somewhat uncertain. It then became urgently necessary for Austria-Hungary to obtain without loss of time a promise from Great Britain that no further opposition would be made by her to the abrogation of Article XXV as soon as the effects of the mediation became clear. On Saturday afternoon, March 27th, Baron von Aehrenthal sent for me as reported in my telegram No. 104,⁽⁵⁾ and said that to clear up all misunderstandings with regard to the above question he must ask for assurances that His Majesty's Government would no longer offer opposition to the abrogation of Article XXV, otherwise Austria-Hungary could not allow the mediation to proceed. He made no mention that the slight concessions he had made in the text for the Servian formula had been made conditionally on Great Britain giving the required assurances with regard to Article XXV, but he added that the whole question of the mediation itself was at stake unless the desired assurances were given; in other words, he was coming back to the attitude he had assumed on Sunday, March 21st, as reported in my telegram No. 85.⁽⁶⁾

It is certainly curious that if Baron von Aehrenthal really believed that he had obtained from Great Britain the private assurances, a matter of such importance to him, he should not have instructed Mensdorff to mention the matter to you, as I understand that Mensdorff was kept informed of all that was taking place between myself and Baron von Aehrenthal. The fact that Mensdorff did not mention this matter to you seems to me the best proof that during the whole of the last week of the

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 718-9, Nos. 737-8.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced. The Telegram is No. 165 of March 23, repeated to Sir F. Cartwright as No. 152. It reported the conversation with M. Isvolski described more fully in his despatch of the same date, *supra*, pp. 727-9, No. 753.]

⁽⁵⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 749, No. 785.]

⁽⁶⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 714, No. 732.]

negotiations Baron von Aehrenthal never for a moment believed that he had obtained these private assurances. In short, after Monday March 22nd, the matter had ceased to be of any very great interest to him as Germany had undertaken to obtain from the Powers their consent to the abrogation of Article XXV, and Baron von Aehrenthal knew that Russia had given way and that therefore France and England would probably follow her example.

Yours truly,
FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 821.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, April 2, 1909.

F.O. 12587/26/09/44A.

D. 1.30 P.M.

Tel. (No. 110.) Confidential.

R. 3.10 P.M.

Your telegram No. 182 repeating Sir A. Nicolson's Telegram No. 179.⁽¹⁾

Language which I have always held to my colleague was that if mediation failed war seemed inevitable unless at the last moment Serbia yielded to Austrian ultimatum. I also always pointed out that unless a formula were quickly found mediation scheme would break down.

I suspect M. Isvolsky's alarms with regard to outbreak of war are traceable to reports sent in by Russian Military Attaché here who throughout the crisis has been most pessimistic and whose alarms I have more than once tried to calm.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 766-7, No. 818.]

No. 822.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, April 2, 1909.

F.O. 12594/26/09/44A.

D. 7.57 P.M.

Tel. (No. 183.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your telegram No. 444.⁽¹⁾

Russian Minister for Foreign Affairs was most grateful for your kind message. I said that I hoped that he would not think of resigning. I have hopes that he is gradually abandoning the idea. He told me that an article would appear in a semi-official Russian paper on Monday in reply to an article in "Norddeutsche" stating that Germany had exercised no pressure. The article would be friendly and courteous, but would state that Russia had been given to understand that if she did not give an affirmative reply Austrian troops would be in Serbia.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 768-9, No. 818.]

No. 823.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

St. Petersburg, April 2, 1909.

I am not surprised at the reflections in your letter to me of the 24th.⁽²⁾

I do not think that it is practicable to change our agreements into alliances: the feeling here about definite commitment to a Continental war on unforeseeable

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS. (Russia), Vol. 34.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 736-7, No. 764.]

conditions would be too dubious to permit us to make an alliance. Russia too must make her internal Government less reactionary—till she does, liberal sentiment here will remain very cool and even those who are not sentimental will not believe that Russia can purge her administration sufficiently to become a strong and reliable Power.

Meanwhile, let us keep an entente with Russia in the sense of keeping in touch so that our diplomatic action may be in accord and in mutual support.

It was unwise of Iswolsky to promise unconditional recognition of Austria's action without consulting us. I am glad you rubbed this point in yourself. Had he consulted us, he might have made the same stipulations as we have done, and Russia would have been saved the appearance of humiliation. There would have been no war—the result would have been just as it is now. Had he consulted us he would also not have been deceived as to whether Cartwright had proposed unconditional recognition. Iswolsky should have been on his guard against that story, for he himself remarked to me that it was d'Aehrenthal's habit to compromise everyone with whom he talked, and he might therefore have inferred that Cartwright's meaning had not been exactly what was represented to him: he ought also to have known that in the existing confidential state of our diplomatic relations with him I should not have made any proposal of importance without telling him. I fear he has judged us by some low standard of his own.

Now, as to the result: Austria has scored by giving nothing to Servia; but Montenegro gets compensation by the removal of limitations on her sovereignty, and Austria has had to pay £2½ million to Turkey, which she said originally she never would pay. The result would not be so bad, if only Iswolsky had withstood German hustling for 48 hours.

Russia has drawn closer to Bulgaria, who is worth many Servias—a result which twenty years ago would have been regarded unfavourably here, but which we now welcome as strengthening Russia's position. She has Bulgaria on her side, she has our goodwill, the Slav feeling is deeply apprehensive of Teuton advance and affronted by Teuton pressure, and it is at Russia's disposal; all these are improvements in her position if only she is cool enough to see them, wise enough to use them, and will reform her internal Government. Germany will not make war upon her if not provoked, but Russia may have to withstand some provocation and bluff now and then: which however will cease if she makes her internal administration efficient and strong.⁽³⁾

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

⁽³⁾ [Some papers of April dealing with the Serbo-Bulgarian *rapprochement* and proposed Alliance are reserved for a later volume.]

No. 824.

Count Benckendorff to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 18133/26/09/44.

Dear Sir Edward,

Chesham House, Chesham Place,

London, April 3, 1909.

I received this morning the enclosed telegram from M. Iswolsky. Please consider it a verbal and strictly confidential communication. I send it to you because it is Saturday, and I don't know whether you will be free to see me.

Yours sincerely,

BENCKENDORFF.

Enclosure in No. 824.

M. Isvolski to Count Benckendorff.

(Télégraphique.)

(Très confidentiel.)

Vous voudrez bien dire très confidentiellement à Sir E. Grey, que nous sommes sûrs qu'il comprendra le sentiment impérieux qui nous pousse à prévenir l'action combinée par MM. d'Aehrenthal et Tittoni dans la question de l'art[icle] 29 du Traité de Berlin et à prendre l'initiative d'une proposition à ce sujet.

En laissant se produire la démarche à deux de l'Autriche et de l'Italie, les Puissances auraient l'air de reconnaître une espèce de protectorat de ces deux Puissances sur le Monténégro et sur toute la mer Adriatique. Nous nous attendons parfaitement à ce que le Gouv[ernemen]t Austro-Hongrois, en répondant à notre proposition, formule des exigences quant à l'alinéa 6. et à une déclaration du Gouv[ernemen]t Français. Dans ce cas les Puissances pourront discuter en commun la suite à donner à ces exigences.

Nous espérons fermement que Sir E. Grey nous accordera son concours dans une circonstance à laquelle nous attachons une grande importance et ne se prêtera pas à la manœuvre Austro-Italienne.

Je désirerais aussi beaucoup connaître l'opinion de Sir Edward sur le fond de la question soulevée par l'Autriche. C'est-à-dire s'il est disposé à accepter une stipulation donnant au port d'Antivari un caractère exclusivement commercial et prohibant la construction de toute fortification de toute nature.

No. 825.

Sir Edward Grey to Count Benckendorff.

F.O. 13133/26/09/44.

Dear Count Benckendorff,

Foreign Office, April 3, 1909.

I certainly agree to M. Iswolsky's proposal that the alteration of Article 29 should be made by an exchange of Notes: but I would deprecate strongly raising any question as to the fortification of Antivari.

It appears to me that Italy does not wish Antivari to be fortified and will be offended and hurt if we were to press for it. In that event, we should be actively opposed by Italy as well as by Germany and Austria.

If, therefore, the Montenegrin question becomes matter of controversy, the situation will be more disadvantageous than it was with regard to Servia.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

I hope most sincerely that you have come back quite recovered and restored by the sun, of which we have not had much in your absence.

No. 826.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 12756/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 57.)

Near East.

My telegram No. 56 of yesterday, sent by post.⁽¹⁾

Minister for Foreign Affairs has written to me this morning as follows:—

“The Austrian Chargé d’Affaires brought to me yesterday evening a note requesting our adhesion to suppression of Article 25 of Treaty of Berlin. I

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]*Paris, April 4, 1909.*

D. 11.20 A.M.

R. 4.4 P.M.

replied favourably, adding that I would confirm in writing my oral answer. With regard to Article 29, you know that Russia has just made a formal proposal to Treaty Powers for the abrogation of paragraphs 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11.⁽²⁾ I received notice of it yesterday at 7 o'clock by a communication from Russian Ambassador. I at once telegraphed to London and Rome to concert with two Cabinets as to reply to make.

"*My personal opinion* is that we run the risk of witnessing a fresh imbroglio from this proposal, which will certainly not be accepted by Austria in the circumstances in which it is made, and I intend to tell Russian Ambassador so this evening."

(²) [*v. infra*, pp. 820-1, .1 pp. II.]

No. 827.

Sir R. Rodd to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 13445/13445/09/3.

(No. 90.) Secret.

Sir,

Rome, D. April 6, 1909.

R. April 10, 1909.

I have the honour to report that Signor Tittoni, who was dining at the Embassy last night, in resuming the history of the late crisis, spoke to me confidentially on the subject of the part which had been played by Baron Aehrenthal. He said that from all he had seen of him personally he was inclined to think that the intractable attitude he had adopted was not altogether willingly assumed by him; that he himself would have been rather disposed to have settled the question of the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina on lines which the other Powers would have made no difficulty in accepting; but circumstances had made him the creature of an influence behind the throne, that namely of the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, whom Signor Tittoni regarded as limited in capacity, narrow-minded and aggressive, but certainly at the present time a force in Austria, especially with the army which he regarded with no little misgiving.

His views were in this respect, he admitted, coloured by his own personal experience. He had found Baron Aehrenthal most conciliatory and at his interview at Desio he had obtained a specific guarantee from him on the subject of the Italian University in Austria. This guarantee led him to make the announcement in the Italian Chamber which had got him into so much trouble. Baron Aehrenthal contemplated no difficulty in meeting the wishes of Italy. But he had found himself face to face in Austria with a dead wall of opposition, for which Signor Tittoni held the Archduke responsible, and had been obliged to repudiate his undertaking.

That Signor Tittoni had received specific guarantees on this point I had heard more than once from authoritative sources, but this was the first occasion on which he had actually told me so in definite language.

I have, &c.

RENNELL RODD.

No. 828.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 13599/26/09/44A.

(No. 221.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 6, 1909.

R. April 13, 1909.

I called on Monsieur Iswolsky to-day, and read to him the reply which you had given to the Austrian Ambassador in regard to the suppression of Article 25.⁽¹⁾ He asked if I would let him have a copy of it; I replied in the affirmative. I then proceeded

(¹) [*v. supra*, p. 751, No. 788.]

to give him the explanations, which you had been good enough to communicate in your telegram No. 459 of yesterday.⁽²⁾ M. Iswolsky, somewhat to my surprise, burst out with an exclamation "C'est un coup mortel à ma position; je n'ai qu'à donner ma démission." I said that I really could not understand the grounds for such an exhibition of feeling; and I could not see in what way his position was affected by what I had communicated to him. He replied bitterly that all was perfectly clear to him. "Sir E. Grey is annoyed with what I was compelled to do the other day, and he wishes to make it clear to me that he no longer desires to co-operate with me. That is the last drop, I can but resign."⁽³⁾ I told him that really he was going too far. I had told him on more than one occasion that you perfectly appreciated and understood the difficulties of the position in which he had found himself placed by the action of the German Government; that you had never imagined that he had deserted his friends, and that I had but the other day given him the most positive assurances from you that you would continue, and desired to continue, to give him your full support. His Excellency said that that was all very well, but why, without saying a word to him, had His Majesty's Government instructed the British Representative at Cetinje to warmly support the Italian proposal? What right had Austria and Italy to come to an arrangement in regard to Montenegro without a word to other Powers except, so far as he knew, to Great Britain? He himself had received nothing from the Italian Government. The modifications of Article 29 were not to be settled between Austria-Hungary and Italy alone: they were a European question; and if the Triple *Entente* were to be maintained, then those Powers should not act independently of each other. I told His Excellency that I had mentioned to him some few days ago the verbal assurances which, in accordance with his instructions, His Majesty's Ambassador had given to Baron d'Aehrenthal, and that it had been stated therein that the modification to Article 29 should, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, be settled in accordance with the wishes of the Italian Government⁽⁴⁾; and I knew that you had considered, as I had previously told him, that the proposals of the Italian Government were so harmless that there was no objection to supporting them at Cetinje. What you had done was simply in the fulfilment of a promise given to the Italian Government "from the beginning." M. Iswolsky interrupted me and asked what was meant by "from the beginning." He himself when in London last autumn had suggested modifications to Article 29 in favour of Montenegro, and the point had been inscribed on the programme. This was the first time he had heard of such a promise. I told him I could not give him an exact date, but that I could doubtless be furnished with one. A promise was a promise, and must be fulfilled: and, so far as I knew, France had not raised any objection to the action of His Majesty's Government. I read to him the last two paragraphs of your reply to the Austrian Ambassador; and pointed out to him that there was ample room left open for discussion of proposals. He surely could take no exception to those paragraphs: and, so far as I could understand, his chief if not sole objection to the nature of the reply which you had made to the Austrian Ambassador was the mention of the Italian Government. I could not quite gather how this was a "mortal blow" to his position. His Excellency replied that when it was known that Great Britain was of opinion that, in respect to the question of Montenegro, the wishes and views of the Italian Government were solely to be considered, and that she ignored completely those of Russia, there would be an outcry that Great Britain had disregarded Russia, and the blame for this would be visited on him. What were the interests of Italy in regard to Montenegro in comparison with those of Russia? I remarked that I presumed that His Majesty's Government had considered it natural that Austria and Italy, as the two principal Adriatic Powers, should be principally and mainly concerned in a country which was on that sea.

(2) [Not reproduced.]

(3) [*r. Count Benckendorff's account of the reception of the telegraphic version in London on 8th April, Siebert (1921), pp. 270-1.*]

(4) [*r. supra*, p. 750, No. 786, and p. 770, No. 820.]

M. Iswolsky contested this : and asserted that the traditional and intimate ties existing between Russia and Montenegro constituted a right on the part of the former to be consulted in all matters concerning the latter country. What, he asked, was the need of giving an immediate reply to the Austrian Ambassador? Because, I said, it had been stated that "we would do so when we were asked," and I had told him a day or two ago that our reply would be given on Monday. Even now our reply was conditional, and certain reserves had been made. Russia had practically replied a week ago without any reserves; France had made one reserve i.e. as to the Servian question which was now settled. He said he would not reply to Austria till the latter had answered his Circular as to the modification of Article 29. I remarked that perhaps Austria would not be particularly impatient as to his reply, as she knew *d'avance* what it would be. He asked what I meant. I said that he had last week informed the German Government that if he were approached by Austria he would say "yes." However it was no use, I remarked, going over the past : but I did wish him to thoroughly understand that he was really in error in thinking for a moment that you had for one single instant considered that what His Majesty's Government had done could in any way be displeasing to the Russian Government, or that His Majesty's Government had the slightest intention to deviate from a co-operation with him. He replied that the insertion in our reply that, when the Italian Government were satisfied as to the modification of Article 29, we would be ready to suppress Article 25, was, he must state, very disagreeable to the Russian Government. I said that I regretted that this should be the case, and I did not see any substantial grounds for it. Moreover he must, in examining the first paragraph, also consider the reservations in the two latter paragraphs. His Excellency would not be convinced, and said that the interest which Russia took in Montenegro was fifty times greater than that which she felt for Servia : and he did consider it regrettable that questions affecting Montenegro should be settled without Russia having been consulted. He had been compelled last week to take the steps which he had adopted; but such reasons did not in the case of His Majesty's Government apply at all in the present instance. However what was done, he said, was done, and it was of no use to discuss the question further.

We then turned for a moment to the Persian question, as to which he will send me some papers to-morrow.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 829.

Sir F. Cartwright to Mr. Tyrrell.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Tyrrell,

British Embassy, Vienna, April 7, 1909.

I have no doubt that any amount of rumours and reports have reached you with regard to the real motives which induced Iswolsky to collapse before the so-called German ultimatum, but I think it may interest you to learn the version which is being circulated here in the inner circle of the "Ballplatz" with regard to this incident. It was communicated to me by one of Aehrenthal's confidants, and I presume that the former desired that I should be informed of it. The story is as follows :—latterly Iswolsky had become nervous with regard to the possible publication of certain letters written by him which were in the hands either of Berchtold or Aehrenthal. It is said that he instructed Osten-Sacken in Berlin to ask for the good offices of Bülow to obtain some assurances that the contents of these letters would not be divulged by Aehrenthal. The assurances were given but in return Iswolsky was reminded that if these assurances were to hold good he must pay up handsomely for them and render Austria-Hungary a real service, that is to say to agree to the abrogation of Article XXV without reserves.

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

If he yielded with regard to this matter it was expected that England and France would have their hands forced. In short, Isvolsky was blackmailed by Austria-Hungary through the intermediary of the German Ambassador at St. Petersburg, and the Russian Minister collapsed not before the threat of war but before the threat of the publication of his own letters. According to this story Isvolsky invented the terrible ultimatum to justify his conduct to the Emperor and to the Council of Ministers.

Whether this account of what took place be true or not, it is difficult to say, but certainly Isvolsky's precipitate collapse requires more explanation than he has given to justify it. On the afternoon of Sunday March 21st I informed the Russian Chargé d'Affaires here that I believed that Aehrenthal would be satisfied if the Powers could give him private assurances that when a Conference met they would raise no objection to the recognition of the Austro-Turkish Protocol. The Russian Chargé d'Affaires telegraphed this information home immediately after I had told it to him; therefore on that night Isvolsky was in possession of information that Austria-Hungary did not press for an immediate and unreserved declaration that the Powers would raise no further objections to the abrogation of Article XXV. Why should he then on the following day have informed Nicolson and the French Ambassador that apparently without resistance he had given more to Germany than he really knew Austria-Hungary was demanding?

In official circles here the belief is prevalent that Germany is resolved to bring Isvolsky down and that in Berlin they are more incensed against him than they are in Vienna. All kinds of hopes are founded upon his prospective fall and Tschirsky has said to friends that when Isvolsky is gone Russia will gradually draw closer to Germany.

A great sense of relief exists here that the crisis is over as everybody dreaded war. It was felt that it would have entailed an immense expenditure on the country with no prospect of an equivalent profit in return. No man is more pleased that it has all ended satisfactorily than Aehrenthal himself. There is not much rejoicing here over the idea that Austria-Hungary is under a debt of obligation to Germany. Germany has a way of making Austria-Hungary feel how dependent she is upon Berlin and all the love she is now showering upon this country is little appreciated for the embraces of Germany rather resemble a strangle.

It is said that at the height of the crisis when the possibility of a war with Russia seemed to exist Germany informed the Austro-Hungarian Government that if they found themselves in difficulties internally through a denudation of troops towards the frontiers, a Saxon corps would be placed at the disposal of Austria-Hungary to keep Bohemia down. The idea of German troops having to come to the assistance of Austria-Hungary for garrison work was so offensive to the Emperor, and even to the Archduke, that it increased the former's desire for a peaceful solution of the crisis and made the latter pause as to his wish for war.

If the world is peaceful and you have time to get away for a short holiday at Whitsuntide I should be delighted if you would come and stay with me in Vienna and make the acquaintance of Aehrenthal.

Yours truly,
FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 830.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, April 8, 1909.

I had closed my other letter to you before I saw Isvolsky this afternoon. He is a strange man, as I found him bright and smiling, and in a very different mood from

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

that in which I left him the day before yesterday.⁽²⁾ He told me he had to go to Munich for an operation—he has a huge tumour on the upper part of his left arm—and he would be back in about three weeks. I asked him point blank if he were coming back to office or only to St. Petersburg. He said, quite naturally,—“to office” though of course one never could tell what would happen. I said that I trusted he was not contemplating his resignation. He replied that his anxiety was lest the active reactionary intrigue against M. Stolypine should succeed. . . .⁽³⁾

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

If M. Stolypine as well as M. Isvolsky should resign their present important posts it would indeed be a serious blow to the interests of Russia as well as for her Allies (i.e. England and France).

E.R.

April 16, '09.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 774-6, No. 828.]

⁽³⁾ [The omitted passages give further details on the internal situation, and refer also to Persian affairs.]

No. 831.

Memorandum on the Events in Russia for the Fortnight ending April 8, 1909.

Summary of Proceedings in the Duma.

(Enclosure in Despatch No. 230 from Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey,
D. April 8, 1909, R. April 13, 1909.)

The Press.

F.O. 13608/286/09/38.

Extract.

. . . The Near Eastern crisis has been followed by the entire Russian Press with similar comments to those made throughout; European diplomacy is considered impotent to see that justice is done; M. Iswolsky's desertion of the Southern Slavs is criminal; the triumph of Germanism is complete; and Russian influence in the Balkans is destroyed beyond all hope of remedy. The violence of these attacks has increased tenfold since it became known that M. Iswolsky had agreed to the abrogation of Article 25 of the Berlin Treaty; and the general tone of the press is best shown by the title of "a diplomatic Tsushima" by which the "Novoe Vremya" designated this step. The suggestion that Russia is unable to act as befits a Great Power owing to her internal situation provokes specially angry comments from the papers of the Left; the "Retch" bitterly draws a parallel between the rigorous severity of the Minister of Justice towards Poland, and the panic-stricken, yielding policy of the Government in foreign affairs; while the "Slovo" says the Government have only themselves to blame, if they feel that the nation is not behind them. The "Novoe Vremya" says that Russia has submitted to so grievous and unwarrantable an insult that she has no force left to utter reproaches, but can only ask why M. Iswolsky should have taken so strong a line on the subject of a Conference in December last, and what has happened since to cause this shameful surrender. The "Rech" [*sic*] says that the Serbs will think that Russia wilfully raised false hopes among them, and has now deserted and deceived them. The "Slovo" considers that the various episodes in the present diplomatic contest are only insignificant currents in the great flood provoked by the elimination of Russia from among the Great Powers; and the "Vecher" observes that even Turkish papers now talk of her as a second-class Power. The "Bourse Gazette" says that Russia's adversaries have cleverly and accurately diagnosed her condition of "political consumption" and acted accordingly. The "Novoe Vremya" says much

of the blame rests on the incompetency and extreme old age of the Russian Representatives abroad, the result of which was that M. Iswolsky had to go on a pilgrimage round Europe doing the work of his own staff. The "Russ" says that such a disaster would have been impossible in the time of the first or second Duma, and the unrepresentative third Duma is chiefly responsible for Russia's weakness.

The later developments in the crisis have been received with similar comments. The "Novoe Vremya" said that M. Iswolsky's surrender was all the more disgraceful if, as stated in the "Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung," no threat was employed by Germany: the *communiqué* respecting the Russian circular to the Powers as to Article 29 was described by the "Retch" as a farce to amuse the public after a great tragedy; and the "Novoe Vremya" asks what would be considered as direct and unceremonious pressure, if an ultimatum is purely friendly advice, as it is argued in the semi-official article in the *Rossia* (see Sir A. Nicolson's despatch No. 226)⁽¹⁾; nobody could be taken in by such a hollow pretence, and the most charitable supposition is that the contradictions of the article are due to misprints. The "Russ" says that for the official German paper to say there was no fear on one side nor threats on the other was a mere diplomatic courtesy; but such a statement coming from the "home-made reptile," the "Rossia," was simply ridiculous. . . .

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 832.

Count de Bosdari to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 13928 26/09/44.

(Translation.)

Y[our] E[xcellency],

Italian Embassy, London, April 11, 1909.

With especial reference to the communications which Y[our] E[xcellency] made to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] relative to the abolition of Art[icle] 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, I have the honour, by order of my Gov[ernment], to inform you that the Italian Gov[ernment] consider the solution given recently to the Montenegrin question as completely satisfactory.

The Italian Embassy at Vienna have been instructed to notify formally to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] the adherence of the Italian Gov[ernment] to the abolition of Art[icle] 25 of the Treaty of Berlin. As I notified to Y[our] E[xcellency] in my Memo[rum] of the 10th inst[ant], the agreement arrived at in regard to Art[icle] 29 of the same Treaty will be communicated by the Cabinet of Vienna to the other Signatory Powers to ask for their assent.

I avail myself of this opportunity to express to Y[our] E[xcellency] the warmest thanks of the Italian Gov[ernment] for the attitude adopted by the British Gov[ernment] towards the Montenegrin question, in which they left the Italian Gov[ernment] to take steps and by postponing a definitive answer to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment]'s demand for the abolition of Art[icle] 25 till the moment when our complete satisfaction had been notified, rendered the most valuable support to the negotiations undertaken by Senator Tittoni.

I have, &c.

A. DE BOSDARI.

No. 833.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, April 13, 1909.

F.O. 13937/26/09/44A.

Tel. (No. 195.)

D. 7.58 P.M.

R. 8.30 P.M.

Turkish Ambassador here has communicated to M. Iswolsky consent of Sublime Porte that paragraphs 5 to 11 of Article 29 should be suppressed, and has expressed

by instructions from his Government the hope that paragraph 4 should also be suppressed. M. Isvolsky is ascertaining views of Montenegrin Government on this latter point.

Repeated to Paris, No. 276, Cettinje, No. 23, Rome, No. 193.

MINUTES.

Paragraph 4 of Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin is as follows:—

“Il y aura pleine et entière liberté de navigation sur la Bojana pour le Monténégro.”
Il ne sera pas construit de fortifications sur le parcours de ce fleuve à l'exception de celles qui seraient [sic] nécessaires à la défense locale de la place de Scutari, lesquelles ne s'étendront pas au-delà d'une distance de six kilomètres de cette ville.”

A. P.

This means Turkey wants to have an unrestricted right of fortification on the Montenegrin frontier. The opposition to this will no doubt come from Russia and Italy.

L. M.

They will have to give reasons for opposing.

E. G.

No. 834.

Memorandum communicated by Jevad Bey.

F.O. 14185/26/09/44.

April 13, 1909.

L'Ambassadeur de Russie à Constantinople ayant demandé d'ordre de son Gouvernement l'abrogation des alinéas 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 et 11 de l'article 29 du Traité de Berlin, le Gouvernement Impérial lui a fait part de son assentiment en déclarant de son côté la suppression de l'alinéa 4 du même article qui a une corrélation avec l'alinéa 7.

Le chargé d'affaires de Turquie est chargé par son Gouvernement de faire une démarche dans ce sens auprès de Son Excellence le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de Sa Majesté Britannique.

“3. Il y aura pleine et entière liberté de navigation sur la Bojana pour le Monténégro.

“4. Il ne sera pas construit de fortifications sur le parcours de ce fleuve, à l'exception de celles qui seraient nécessaires à la défense locale de la place de Scutari, lesquelles ne s'étendront pas au delà d'une distance de six kilomètres de cette ville.

“7. Les fortifications situées entre le lac et le littoral, sur le territoire monténégro, seront rasées, et il ne pourra en être élevé de nouvelles dans cette zone.”

*Ambassade Impériale de Turquie, Londres,
le 12 avril, 1909.*

MINUTES.

The Turkish Chargé d'Affaires left the annexed Memorandum with me today and asked for an answer.

In reply to the Russian circular about Art[icle] 29, they say they assent but ask that alinéa 4 be also abrogated.

By this sentence, the Turks are debarred from putting fortifications along their side of the river Bojana whereas by the abolition of Article 7 the Montenegrins will be allowed to do so, on their side. This will constitute an injustice to Turkey.

Russia and Italy will possibly not like this, as it will deprive Montenegro of an advantage, but Austria will not object.

We might say that you will give your careful consideration to the question and let him have your views as soon as possible and telegraph to Sir A. Nicolson and Sir F. Bertie—⁽¹⁾

“The Porte have asked for abrogation of alinéa 4 of Art[icle] 29 which debars them from erecting fortifications along their side of the river Bojana whereas Montenegro will

⁽¹⁾ [Telegram sent to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 496, and to Sir F. Bertie, No. 274.]

be allowed by the abrogation of alinéa 7 to erect fortifications on her side. What are views of Russian Gov[ernmen]t? We should have no objection if other Powers agreed."

L. M.

It seems quite fair, but we must hear what other Powers have to say before finally committing ourselves.

E. G.

[ED. NOTE.—The following extract from a private letter from Sir C. Hardinge is inserted here as a comment upon the above.

Sir Charles Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nico,

Ditton Park, Slough, April 12, 1909.

. . . (2) I have been much comforted by the announcement in to-day's papers that the Emperor has given the White Eagle to Stolypin and Benckendorff. I cannot help feeling that there is an intentional demonstration on the part of the Emperor in the conferment of these honours and that they are intended to show his confidence in Stolypin's Gov[ernmen]t and also in the loyalty of our policy. I hope that it may not be shown that I am wrong in drawing these conclusions. I quite realise the strength of German traditions at St. Petersburg and the power enjoyed by German sympathisers at Court, but with a full knowledge of the extreme sensitiveness of the Emperor it seems to me almost impossible that he will ever get over the brutality of German methods and the humiliation that has been inflicted upon him. The fact that he himself had to bow before the German *démarche* is what he will never get over and what will in the end save Tsvolsky, although the latter is much to blame for not having foreseen it and for not having modified his policy accordingly.

Tsvolsky's excuses and recriminations in connection with the Montenegrin question have not impressed us favourably. It is evident that he fancied that it might be possible to retrieve his hopeless position by pressing to obtain for Montenegro what we and all clear sighted people could see there was no possible hope of obtaining. I think that we have come out of it well, especially as we refused to agree to Aehrenthal's last exigencies and he gave way in the end. Tsvolsky should realise the great advantage of war in the Balkans having been postponed to a later date when Russia may be in a better state of preparation, and I only hope that Russian statesmen will take the recent lesson to heart. . . . (3)

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.]

(1) [Carnock MSS.]

(2) [The opening sentences of this letter are of a purely personal nature.]

(3) [The rest of this letter touches on the possibility of a Conference and on personal matters.]

No. 835.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

St. Petersburg, April 14, 1909.

F.O. 14048/14048/09/44A.

D. 8.2 P.M.

Tel. (No. 197.)

R. 9.30 P.M.

I had audience with the Emperor this morning. I reviewed rapid events during last few weeks, and told His Majesty that His Majesty's Government were most anxious to co-operate closely with Russia in all matters. The Emperor cordially and emphatically reciprocated this view, and authorized me to inform you that His Majesty's Government could rely on his firmly maintaining the *entente*. I said that we placed the most complete confidence in His Majesty. I explained that His Majesty's Government fully appreciated the extremely difficult position in which the Russian Government have recently been placed, and that you were quite convinced

that M. Isvolsky had no other course open to him but to accept German demand. His Majesty said that he was very glad to hear this from me, as he was a little afraid lest His Majesty's Government might have thought that the Russian Government were taking a line of their own, but the (German summons was so imperative that a "yes" or a "no" was the sole alternative. His Majesty said that he was sorry that His Majesty's Government and the French Government had not been consulted, and remarked that M. Isvolsky had been a little too nervous perhaps. I replied that the position of M. Isvolsky had been a very delicate one, and but little time had been left to him to come to a decision. In any case, I could assure His Majesty that my Government felt no resentment at all in the matter. Emperor said that action of His Majesty's Government throughout the whole crisis of the past few months had been most clearly correct and loyal.

We spoke of the German and Austrian solidarity and the probability of German hegemony in Europe, and I said that what was passing in Europe and Persia rendered it, to my mind, essential that the *entente* should be maintained in its full vigour. The Emperor again with great emphasis said that it must be knit still more firmly if possible.

I touched on Prime Minister's health, and praised him as far as I thought it was prudent to do so. His Majesty spoke in warm and sympathetic terms of his Excellency, and said that he hoped to see him back in two weeks or so in renewed health and vigour. We spoke of the recent (? events) in Turkey and on one or two other matters.

On leaving, I thanked His Majesty for having given me an opportunity of speaking frankly with him.

He replied that he had had much pleasure in having a good talk. He was most friendly, and I am sure that we can rely with confidence on his supporting the *entente* with perfect loyalty.

His Majesty is much perplexed at the crisis at Constantinople, but I dare say that I may hear more from M. Isvolsky this afternoon.

(Most Confidential.)

I could not gather how the Emperor views M. Isvolsky, but he seemed to entertain his old friendly feelings towards the Prime Minister. Palace circles seem to be under the impression that chances of the Prime Minister retaining office are somewhat doubtful.

No. 836.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.⁽¹⁾

F.O. 15520/15520/09/38.

(No. 239.) Confidential.

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. April 14, 1909.

R. April 26, 1909.

I applied yesterday for the honour of an audience of the Emperor, and His Majesty was pleased to accord me one this morning. I told His Majesty that as so much had occurred since I had last had the honour of waiting upon him I was desirous of soliciting a few moments' conversation, and I trusted that he would forgive me for intruding on his time. His Majesty replied that much indeed had occurred since we last met and that he would be pleased to converse with me. I ran rapidly over a few of the principal events during the past few months and said that my Government had throughout desired to co-operate in the closest manner with the Russian Government not only in the Middle East but also in the affairs of South Eastern Europe, and that I could assure him that this desire to act cordially with Russia was one of the principal bases of our foreign policy. His Majesty said that he fully and entirely reciprocated

⁽¹⁾ [In shorter form, Tel. No. 197, of same date, *v.* immediately preceding document.]

this desire, and he added, " You can tell your Government from me that it is my firm intention to maintain the *entente* existing between the two countries." I thanked His Majesty for this expression of good-will, and said that my Government had absolute confidence in His Majesty.

I then alluded to the recent request put forward by the German Ambassador that Russia should, without formulating any reserves, agree to the suppression of article 25 of the Berlin Treaty should the Austro-Hungarian Government approach her on the subject. I said that my Government fully appreciated the difficulty in which the Russian Government had been placed by what was in fact a peremptory summons on the part of the German Government, and that it was perfectly understood that there was no alternative in the existing circumstances but to give an affirmative reply to the German demand. It was, I remarked, hardly to be maintained that a general conflagration should be risked on account of the question at issue, and though, if time had permitted, my Government might have preferred if they had been consulted before a reply had been given, still I could assure His Majesty that they did not for one moment believe that in taking the course which she did, Russia had any desire to separate herself from her two partners. His Majesty said that he was much pleased and greatly relieved to listen to what I had said. He had feared that my Government might consider that Russia was suddenly taking a line of her own; but the matter had been extremely urgent and it was only possible to give without delay a " Yea " or " Nay." He feared that M. Iswolsky had been unduly nervous during the crisis. I said that M. Iswolsky had been suddenly thrust into a very perplexing situation, with barely time given him for reflection: and I ventured to think that all allowances should be made for a man who had had such a severe strain put upon him.

There was, however, a larger question to my mind which might have wide-reaching consequences: and that was the evidence which had been afforded of the close " solidarity " between Germany and Austria-Hungary and the tendency which was shown to establish an Austro-German hegemony in Europe. Were such a dictatorship established it might have very serious consequences, and to my mind it was more than ever necessary that the triple *entente* should be maintained and consolidated. His Majesty replied with great emphasis that he entirely agreed with me, and that it was his earnest desire, that the *entente* with England should be as closely knit as possible: and His Majesty made a motion with his hands to illustrate his meaning.

His Majesty added that the policy of His Majesty's Government throughout the past six months had been most correct, clear and loyal; and that he was quite convinced that they intended to act in close co-operation with Russia.

I said that I was much gratified with this expression of His Majesty's opinion. The Emperor then alluded to the naval debates in Parliament, and asked if I were aware of the naval preparations which Germany had recently been making. I said that I believed that my Government were fully informed. His Majesty asked what I thought of the naval " scare " in England. I replied that it seemed to me that it was a mistake to imagine that the English fleet of pre-Dreadnought days was not the most powerful afloat and ready to meet any possible combinations. At the same time the great activity in German shipbuilding had, I believe, opened the eyes, even of the most unwilling, to admit the fact that the German navy was being constructed with the object of contesting with England the dominion of the seas. I had no doubt whatever that we should be quite competent to keep ahead in the race, and maintain our maritime supremacy. I laid some stress on this point, as I knew that the opinion here was gaining ground that England was being overtaken by Germany on the element on which she had reigned supreme; and I did not wish that it should be thought that our naval supremacy was seriously imperilled and that thereby our international position was being weakened.

His Majesty quite agreed with me, but observed that it was unfortunate that the French navy had been allowed to fall so much behind. He said he had been carefully studying Mr. Haldane's creation of a territorial army: and asked what force England could send abroad in case of need. I said I could hardly answer

off-hand, but that I believed that England could dispatch some 150,000 men, who could be plumped down at any convenient spot that might be selected, and that an enemy would be unaware which locality would be chosen. This, I remarked, gave an island Power with a supreme navy a great advantage. His Majesty said 150,000 men constituted a most respectable force. His Majesty said that Austria-Hungary was about to build four Dreadnoughts, and would not such an increase to her fleet necessitate some strengthening of our Mediterranean fleet, which of late had been considerably reduced? I replied that this might be possible, but that there was plenty of time to consider that question.

His Majesty then turned to the recent revolution in Turkey, but as the news which had been received was not very precise it is hardly necessary for me to report the remarks which passed on that subject.

I said that I had been sorry to hear of the illness of M. Stolypine, as he was a personal friend of mine, and a man for whom I had very great esteem. In fact he made a most favourable impression on all with whom he came in contact, and that the King had been most pleased to have met him at Reval and had entertained a high opinion of his character and capacity.

The Emperor quite concurred with my observation, and said that he hoped that M. Stolypine would return in two weeks or so in renewed health and vigour. His Majesty was quite cordial in his remarks in regard to M. Stolypine.

I remarked that the Duma would shortly reassemble after the Easter vacation: and that it seemed anxious to work steadily and to pass some careful legislation. His Majesty said that he was quite satisfied with the Duma, which was a sensible body, though he much regretted that M. Gutchkoff, the head of the Octobrist party, had thought it necessary to criticise in open session the shortcomings of the generals and of the Army. He had no objection to criticisms, but he thought, especially at the present juncture, that it was a grave error for a prominent deputy to dilate on the defects of the army and to proclaim them to the world. He had let M. Gutchkoff know that he was displeased with him.

I thought it best not to dwell on internal affairs, and I observed that Bulgaria appeared to be impatient to receive official acknowledgment of her independence. His Majesty said that he understood that General Paprikoff had informed M. Iswolsky that the patience of His Government was being exhausted by the delays occasioned by the dilatoriness of the Turkish Government, and had threatened to break off all negotiations if the matter was not settled in two or three days. It would be unfortunate if Bulgaria were again to enter into strained relations with Turkey. He said that he had spoken seriously to Prince Ferdinand when he was here, and had "scolded" him as to his attitude. I inquired on what point His Majesty had manifested his displeasure? The Emperor said chiefly in regard to the relations between Bulgaria and Servia, and he had told Prince Ferdinand that it was very necessary that Bulgaria should establish the best possible relations both with Servia and Turkey. The Prince had replied that public opinion in Bulgaria was opposed to any cordial relations with Servia: but this was a mere pretext, as the Prince was content to ignore or lead public opinion in Bulgaria wherever it suited him. The Prince was an exceedingly clever man but not very reliable.

His Majesty then made a few remarks as to Persia, which I will report in another despatch.

On leaving the Emperor I said that I trusted that he would forgive me for having intruded upon his few leisure minutes; and His Majesty replied that it had given him great pleasure to have had a "good talk," and he was much pleased that I had asked for an audience.

I feel confident that His Majesty sincerely desires to maintain the *entente* with England; and that when he has given his word complete trust can be reposed in it. I was unable to gather the opinion which His Majesty held of M. Iswolsky. The only remark which he made of him personally was a little disparaging, while he emphasised strongly "the clear and correct policy" of His Majesty's Government.

as if he desired to make a comparison. In regard to M. Stolypine he certainly spoke with warmth and good feeling: but I heard subsequently in palace circles that the position of His Excellency is shaken and the future uncertain.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 837.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 14174/2212/09/38.

(No. 123.) Confidential.

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 14, 1909.

Count Benckendorff informed me to-day that the language which he had used to me as his personal opinion was warmly approved by M. Iswolsky and he therefore repeated it.

It was to the effect that the recent German action at St. Petersburg in the Servian affair would not be easily forgotten by public opinion in Russia and in so far as it had been intended to prejudice relations between England and Russia it would have a contrary effect; M. Iswolsky's own position with the Emperor was therefore unshaken.

I said I was very glad to hear this which entirely accorded with my own sentiments.

Count Benckendorff said that from what he heard it appeared that M. Iswolsky's holiday was not a preliminary to resignation.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 838.

Mr. O'Reilly to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 15985/15985/09/27.

(No. 4.)

Cettinje, D. April 15, 1909.

Sir,

R. April 28, 1909.

Prince Nicolas sent for most of the foreign Representatives this morning, in order to take leave of them before going to spend a short time at Venice and on the Riviera. The Austrian Minister and myself arriving at the Palace at the same moment, His Royal Highness received us together. He said he was glad that I should hear what he was about to say to Baron Kuhn. He was disgusted with the policy of Russia, which had *fait du théâtre* and although he would preserve a grateful recollection of past benefits, he would never put trust in that country again. It was now evidently the fate of Montenegro to be the satellite of Austria-Hungary, and he was glad that the resumption of good relations now enabled him to ask the Government of the Dual Monarchy for the assistance which the Principality required for its development under these conditions. What he desired was:

1. The draining of part of the Lake of Scutari;
2. The capital necessary to buy out the Italian Railway and Tobacco Monopoly Companies;
3. Further railway and road constructions; and
4. A Commercial treaty.

In return he could promise the co-operation of Montenegro against any Power except Russia, and that "nous serons toujours prêts à nous mettre en avant quand l'Autriche veut bouger."

[16789]

Baron Kuhn replied that he would report these wishes to his Government, which had always been disposed to consider them favourably. He told me afterwards that what His Royal Highness had said about readiness to co-operate with Austria was no more than he had said any time in the last four years up till October last, and that he therefore did not attribute any special significance to it.

I have, &c.

W. O'REILLY.

No. 839.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 14202/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, April 16, 1909.

Tel. (No. 208.)

D. 4 P.M.

My Tel[egram] No. 199.⁽¹⁾

You may address a note to Baron Aehrenthal informing him of assent of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to abrogation of Art[icle] XXV of Treaty of Berlin.

Any further formalities can be arranged later.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 840.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 14555/26/09/44A.

Vienna, D. April 16, 1909.

(No. 65.)

Sir,

R. April 19, 1909.

I have the honour to report that I took the opportunity yesterday, when seeing Baron von Aehrenthal, to enquire of him whether he could give me any information as to the present state of the relations between Serbia and the Dual Monarchy. He replied that he regretted to have to say that they were far from satisfactory; the excitement of the last six months had bred an ill-feeling on either side of the frontier which it was difficult to allay in a moment, and this ill-feeling prevented the two countries from re-establishing truly friendly relations with each other. Moreover, matters were considerably complicated in this country by the attitude of the agrarians who, foreseeing that by the new Commercial Treaty which is about to be concluded with Roumania a considerable amount of cattle will be admitted to this Empire, are assuming an uncompromising attitude against similar concessions being granted to Serbia. Baron von Aehrenthal, who seemed worried, said to me that it was difficult perhaps for other countries to appreciate fully the difficulties he had to contend with, not the least of which was the existence of two Parliaments in this country; he added that it was a waste of time for him to negotiate a Commercial Treaty with Serbia containing clauses which were sure to be rejected by one or other of these two Parliaments. What at present he was prepared to offer Serbia was the maximum he could hope to obtain Parliamentary sanction for; perhaps it was not much but he could not do more in the present state of public opinion which the agrarians were working up against Serbia, now that the expenditure incurred by the country in consequence of the Servian crisis was beginning to be realised. I understood from His Excellency that he had offered Serbia most favoured nation treatment, facilities for the transit of meat through the country, and permission to import certain farm produce, such as eggs, fowls, etc. I enquired whether he thought it possible to make any concessions with regard to the importation of Servian pigs and cattle into Austria-Hungary; he replied that in face of resolute agrarian opposition he could not hold out any hope of such concessions being offered to Serbia for the present.

Baron von Aehrenthal also informed me that Dr. Simitch, the Servian Minister here, had just officially denounced the Consular and Navigation Conventions between

Servia and this country; Baron von Aehrenthal regretted this step which he said was inspired by a spirit of retaliation as it would embitter the feeling—which was already bad enough—between the two countries. He did not, however, give up all hope that before the end of the year better feelings might prevail on either side and a reasonable *modus vivendi* be arrived at which would contribute to the establishment at least of a state of “bon voisinage” between the two countries.

This morning the Vienna “Zeit” refers to the unsatisfactory relations between Austria-Hungary and Servia, and points out that by the non-existence of a Commercial Treaty with Servia, foreign—and especially German—manufactured goods will gradually replace similar goods which until now have been imported from this country.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 841.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.

F.O. 14764/13941/09/44.

Confidential.

Sir,

Admiralty, April 19, 1909.

With reference to your letter No. 14723 of to-day's date, I am commanded by My Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a telegram dated to-day No. 99 which has been sent in cypher to the Commander in Chief Mediterranean.

I am, &c.

C. I. THOMAS.

Enclosure in No. 841.

Admiralty to Admiral Sir A. Curzon-Howe.

Tel. (No. 99.)

Admiralty, April 19, 1909.

In accordance with request from F[oreign] O[ffice] arrange to dispatch three vessels to Lemnos to await orders, in addition to the ships already ordered, the names of the ships sent being communicated. You may make arrangements direct with H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador at Constantinople as to the movements of H[is] M[ajesty's] ships *Swiftsure* and *Triumph* and *Diana* wherever required, informing the Admiralty as necessary.⁽¹⁾

H[is] M[ajesty] the King is to be kept informed of all movements of Mediterranean ships, and you are to convey to H[is] M[ajesty] an expression of T[heir] Lordships' extreme regret that in view of the situation in the Levant it will not now be possible for existing arrangements for his reception at Malta by the fleet to be adhered to.

⁽¹⁾ [This refers to the naval precautions taken because of the Counter-Revolution in Constantinople. For a report on the Counter-Revolution, *v. supra*, pp. 313-9, No. 218.]

No. 842.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, April 19, 1909.

I have reported officially my Audience of the Emperor.⁽²⁾ I wished to take the opportunity of giving Iswolsky a lift up, so that when speaking of the German summons, I dwelt on the difficulty in which the Russian Gov[ernment] had been placed, and I

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 781-5, Nos. 835-6.]

passed over as lightly as I could the fact of our not having been consulted. In fact I spoke in defence of Iswolsky somewhat, I expect, in the same terms as he himself may have employed in explaining his action to the Emperor. I wished to let H[is] M[ajesty] understand that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t bore no resentment: and in my hasty sketch of late events I brought out to H[is] M[ajesty] the manner in which you had cooperated so loyally with the Russian Gov[ernmen]t. It was then that H[is] M[ajesty] remarked that your line had been throughout clear, correct, and loyal. He was most emphatic, and weighed his words as he spoke them, as to his firm intention of firmly maintaining the *entente*. I have every confidence in the Emperor keeping his word. In speaking of Germany he was a little reserved—which is natural—and he was careful to give utterance to no expression of ill will, though I hear that it was most painful to him to have to temporarily haul down his flag. When we were speaking of the possibility of Germany, with Austria, endeavouring to establish a hegemony in Europe, I remarked that it was necessary to strengthen and consolidate the *entente* by all possible means, and I instanced close commercial and financial intercourse; the Emperor brightened up and locked his hands together saying "we must come close together." I thought it best here to leave the subject—as I had obtained what I wanted—a word in favour of Iswolsky, a full recognition on the Emperor's part of the loyalty, and a firm intention to keep the *entente* going. . . .⁽³⁾

Y[our]s sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

⁽³⁾ [The closing paragraphs of this long letter give a detailed account of further conversation with the Emperor on the internal situation and general European relations.]

No. 843.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

Sophia, April 20, 1909.

F.O. 14899/26/09/44A.

D. 1 P.M.

Tel. (No. 60.)

R. 2.15 P.M.

Sir G. Lowther's tel[egram] No. 141.⁽¹⁾

President of the Council called at the Agency this morning and requested me to convey to you the warmest thanks of the Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t for the services which H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] had rendered them in the matter of signature of the protocol and of recognition.

In reply to a question of mine H[is] E[xc]cellency authorised me to assure you that Bulgarian Gov[ernmen]t would not interfere in internal affairs of Turkey which was a question for the Turks to settle between themselves and that they would use all their influence to induce their compatriots in Macedonia not only to abstain from taking advantage of the present situation for furthering their own ends but also to cooperate loyally with the Turks for maintenance of order.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It announced the signature of the Turco-Bulgarian Protocol.]

No. 844.

Sir E. Goschen to Sir Edward Grey.

Berlin, April 20, 1909.

F.O. 14905/13941/09/44A.

D. 1.42 P.M.

Tel. (No. 51.)

R. 3.15 P.M.

Near East.

I hear that when passing through Vienna Enver Bey received a formal assurance from Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs that if Bulgaria and Servia endeavoured to profit by present situation to cause embarrassment to Turkey Austria-Hungary would at once march against them.

This information comes from Monastir.

No. 845.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 14899/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, April 20, 1909.

Tel. (No. 108.)

D. 5.15 p.m.

Turco-Bulgarian Relations.

You should express H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment]'s appreciation of the assurance contained in the final paragraph of your telegram No. 60.⁽¹⁾

Repeated to Paris No. 321, St. Petersburg No. 572, and Bucharest No. 16.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 788, No. 843.]

No. 846.

Sir Edward Grey to Count de Bosdari.

F.O. 18928/26/09/44.

Foreign Office, April 20, 1909.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge Your letter of the 11th instant,⁽¹⁾ in which you inform of your Gov[ernment]'s satisfaction in regard to the modification of Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin, and in which you convey the thanks of your Gov[ernment] in regard to the attitude adopted by H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] in the question of Montenegro.

With regard to Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin, I have to inform you that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have intimated to the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernment] their assent to its abrogation.

[I have, &c.

E. GREY].

⁽¹⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 779, No. 832.]

No. 847.

Count Mensdorff to Sir Edward Grey.

Austro-Hungarian Embassy, London, D. April 20, 1909.

F.O. 14982/26/09/44.

R. April 21, 1909.

Le Soussigné a l'honneur, d'ordre de son Gouvernement, de porter ce qui suit à la connaissance de Sir Edward Grey, Secrétaire d'Etat des Affaires Etrangères :

Le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal est disposé de consentir à la suppression des dispositions de l'Article XXIX du Traité de Berlin aux alinéas 5, 7, 8, 9, 10 et 11,⁽¹⁾ contenant des restrictions des droits de souveraineté du Monténégro, en tant que cette suppression aura obtenu le consentement de toutes les Puissances Signataires dudit Traité. Quant à l'alinéa 6 du même Article il a été convenu dans un échange d'idées entre le Cabinet de Vienne et celui de Rome directement intéressé lui-même dans la Mer Adriatique, que cet alinéa devrait être remplacé par le suivant : "Le port d'Antivari doit conserver le caractère de port commercial ; il ne pourra pas y être érigé des ouvrages qui le transforment en port militaire."

En communiquant ce qui précède à Monsieur le Secrétaire d'Etat des Affaires Etrangères, le Soussigné a l'honneur de Le prier de bien vouloir l'informer, si le Cabinet de Sa Majesté Britannique est disposé à adhérer aux modifications ci-dessus énumérées de l'Article XXIX du Traité de Berlin.

Le Soussigné saisit, &c.

ALB. MENSENDORFF.

Londres, le 20 avril, 1909.

⁽¹⁾ [*v. infra*, pp. 820-1, App. II.]

No. 848.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Lowther.

F.O. 14917/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, April 21, 1909.

Tel. (No. 267.)

D. 1.15 P.M.

Sir A. Nicolson's tel[egram] No. 217.⁽¹⁾

In our view Turco-Bulgarian protocol should be communicated to Treaty Powers officially: on receipt of it we shall be prepared to express at once to the other Treaty Powers our readiness to recognize Bulgarian Independence without further delay. You should inform Turkish Gov[ernmen]t this appears to be the procedure corresponding most closely to that adopted by Austria and by Germany with regard to Austro-Turkish protocol and should therefore be the one calculated to avoid objections on their part.

Also to Sir G. Buchanan, No. 110. Repeated to St. Petersburg, No. 578.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced. It announced the decision of Emperor Nicholas to telegraph congratulations to "His Majesty King Ferdinand I."]

No. 849.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, April 21, 1909.

F.O. 15060/26/09/44A.

D. 7.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 117.)

R. 8.15 P.M.

I tried this afternoon to elicit an expression of opinion from Baron d'Aehrenthal as to when the Austro-Hungarian Government would recognize Bulgarian independence. He replied that they would not do so without first obtaining satisfactory guarantees for the protection of interests of shareholders of the Oriental Railway. He would not say if he would be satisfied with a Turkish guarantee for payment of railway indemnity, and evidently did not wish to commit himself with regard to this question.

Baron d'Aehrenthal showed much anxiety with regard to situation at Constantinople, and at news which had reached him of the probable deposition of the Sultan.

No. 850.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 15153/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, April 22, 1909.

Tel. (No. 328.)

D. 6.30 P.M.

Article of Turco-Bulgarian protocol relating to recognition of Bulgarian independence has been officially communicated to H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] by the Bulg[aria]n Gov[ernmen]t.⁽¹⁾ Inform Gov[ernmen]t to which you are accredited that we propose to give immediate recognition and enquire their views.

Also to Sir E. Goschen, No. 176; Sir F. Cartwright, No. 217, and Sir R. Rodd, No. 217.

Repeated to Sofia, No. 116, and to Sir A. Nicolson, No. 599—for his information only.

⁽¹⁾ [This was done early on April 22, by a note given to Sir G. Buchanan by M. Malinov. Sir G. Buchanan telegraphed it at once to Sir E. Grey, No. 63 of April 22, D. 12 noon, R. 12.45 P.M.]

No. 851.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir G. Buchanan.

F.O. 15181/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, April 23, 1909.

Tel. (No. 117.)

D. 2.15 P.M.

Please communicate following message from me to the President of the Council:—

"I congratulate Your Excellency on the successful termination of your negotiations with the S[ublime] Porte. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t have much pleasure in recognising the independence of Bulgaria to which the S[ublime] Porte has already assented in the protocol which has been signed at Const[antino]ple. H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernmen]t express their best wishes for the prosperity and peaceful development of the new kingdom."

The King, who is at Malta, has been asked to telegraph direct to King Ferdinand.

No. 852.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

F.O. 15229/26/09/44A.

Foreign Office, April 23, 1909.

Tel. (No. 178.)

D. 5.45 P.M.

Y[ou]r Tel[egram] 52.⁽¹⁾

You should inform the German Gov[ernmen]t that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are recognizing Bulgarian independence.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

No. 853.

Sir G. Lowther to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 15934/26/09/44.

(No. 293.)

Pera, D. April 24, 1909.

Sir,

R. April 28, 1909.

With reference to my Telegram No. 141 of the 19th Instant,⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to transmit, herewith, copy of the Turco-Bulgarian Protocol which was signed here on the 19th Instant by Rifaat Pasha and Monsieur Liaptcheff, as communicated to me by the latter.

Monsieur Liaptcheff has not sent me a copy of the annex regarding the arrangement arrived at on the questions of the organisation of the Mussulman communities and of the vakufs referred to in Article II of the Protocol, nor have I, in consequence of the disturbed condition of affairs here, been able to obtain anything on the subject from the Sublime Porte.

I have, &c.

GERARD LOWTHER.

Enclosure in No. 853.

Turco-Bulgarian Protocol, signed April 19, 1909.

Les accords suivants sont intervenus entre le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman, représenté par Son Excellence Rifaat Pacha, Ministre des affaires Etrangères, d'une part. et le Gouvernement Bulgare, représenté par Son Excellence M. Liaptcheff,

(¹) [Not reproduced. v. *supra*, p. 788, No. 843, note.]

Ministre de Commerce et de l'Agriculture, d'autre part, en exécution du Protocole Russo-Turc signé *ad referendum* à St. Pétersbourg le 3 Mars 1909.⁽²⁾

ARTICLE I.

Le Gouvernement Bulgare ayant pris connaissance des stipulations dudit protocole, déclare y adhérer pleinement et renoncer vis-à-vis du Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman à toute réclamation du chef du premier paragraphe de l'article X du Traité de Berlin relatif au chemin de fer Roustchouk-Varna. De son côté, le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman renonce, conformément à l'article III du Protocole Russo-Turc de St. Pétersbourg, à toute réclamation matérielle envers la Bulgarie et la Roumélie Orientale existente jusqu'à la date du 22 septembre/5 octobre 1908.

Toutefois la stipulation *in fine* de L'article III dudit Protocole s'arrêtera aux mots "par le règlement organique et ses annexes" et y sera ajouté à la ligne, la phrase suivante :—

"Le Gouvernement Bulgare payera des intérêts à 5 % sur les quarante millions francs de la redevance Rouméliote à partir du 22 septembre (5 octobre) 1908, jusqu'à la ratification du présent protocole."

ARTICLE II.

L'arrangement ci-annexé au sujet de l'organisation des communautés musulmanes et des biens vakoufs fait partie intégrante du présent protocole et sera signé en même temps. La liberté et la pratique extérieure du culte seront assurées aux Mussulmans comme par le passé. Ils continueront à jouir des mêmes droits civils et politiques que les habitants appartenant à d'autres cultes. Le nom de Sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan comme Calife, continuera à être prononcé dans les prières publiques [des] mussulmans. Pour ce qui est des vakoufs Mustesna, le Gouvernement Bulgare instituera dans un délai maximum de trois mois une commission administrative qui examinera le bien fondé des réclamations des intéressés.

ARTICLE III.

Le Gouvernement Bulgare s'engage à payer pour les réclamations du Gouvernement Ottoman du chef des Postes et Télégraphes cent dix mille francs pour timbres-poste, matériel, etc.

ARTICLE IV.

Pour ce qui est dans les Phares situés en Bulgarie et en Roumélie Orientale, le Gouvernement Bulgare payera au Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman cent quatre-vingt mille trois cent sept francs; de la sorte (que) toute réclamation de l'Administration des Phares sera aussi considérés [*sic*] comme réglée.

ARTICLE V.

Le Gouvernement Bulgare reconnaissant le bien fondé des réclamations de la Sublime Porte au sujet du service sanitaire, s'engage à lui payer quatre cent cinquante neuf mille neuf cent trente neuf piastres et demie.

ARTICLE VI.

Les diverses sommes mentionnées aux articles III à V du présent Protocole seront payées à Constantinople, au change officiel de 4,40 pour celles qui sont stipulées en francs, dans les quinze jours qui suivront la ratification du présent protocole. Les intérêts prévus à l'article 5 *in fine* du protocole Russo-Turc seront payés dans les mêmes conditions et le même délai.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, pp. 689-90, *Ed. note.*]

ARTICLE VII.

Les dettes directes de la Bulgarie vis-à-vis de la Compagnie des chemins de fer Orientaux, résultant de transports, de matériel saisi, &c., ainsi que L'indemnité d'exploitation à partir du 9 (22) septembre 1908 sur les lignes occupées jusqu'au règlement de la part revenant à la dite Compagnie sur les quarante millions de francs spécifiés à l'article III du Protocole de St. Pétersbourg seront réglées d'un commun accord entre le gouvernement Bulgare et la Compagnie.

ARTICLE VIII.

Les questions pendantes entre le Gouvernement Impérial Ottoman et le Gouvernement Bulgare, spécifiées à l'article V du Protocole de St. Pétersbourg, ayant été aplanies comme ci-dessus, le Gouvernement Impériale [*sic*] Ottoman déclare reconnaître le nouvel état politique de la Bulgarie.

ARTICLE IX.

Le présent Protocole sera ratifié et les ratifications en seront échangées à Constantinople aussitôt que faire se pourra et au plus tard dans un mois.

Fait en double expédition à Constantinople, le 6 (19) avril, 1909.⁽³⁾

(L.C.)	(Signé)	LIAPTCHEFF.
(L.C.)	(Signé)	RIFAAT.

(3) [Ratifications were exchanged May 19, 1909. The text given here is taken from the typed copy sent as an enclosure by Sir G. Lowther. It has been checked with that given in G. Fr. de Martens: *Nouveau Recueil Général de Traités . . . continuation . . . par Heinrich Tréppe* . . . Leipzig (1911), 3rd ser., Vol. IV, pp. 57-9. The text given is identical in substance with that published in Martens. There are some minor differences in capitalisation and punctuation.]

No. 854.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 15156/26/09/44.

(No. 129.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 27, 1909.

The Russian Ambassador called at the Foreign Office on the 19th instant and made a communication to the following effect:—

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t proposed that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnmen]t and the French Gov[ernmen]ts [*sic*] should represent to the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t the necessity of notifying to the Powers signatory of the Treaty of Berlin that Turkey was ready to proceed to the recognition of the independence of Bulgaria, and, on such a notification being received from the Ottoman Gov[ernmen]t, that the Powers should send congratulations to Prince Ferdinand as King.

Count Benckendorff called again on the 20th instant and Sir C. Hardinge informed him that the view of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnmen]t was that the first step should be taken by Russia alone, or with France and G[rea]t Britain, to express readiness to recognise Bulgarian independence, and to ask Germany and Austria-Hungary to do so on the basis of the Turco-Bulgarian protocol, in the same manner as Germany had acted in inviting the Powers to abrogate Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin on the basis of the Austro-Turkish Protocol. In the event of any Power refusing to recognise the independence of Bulgaria, the other Powers could follow the precedent created by Germany in agreeing to the abolition of Article 25 without

having secured the simultaneous sanction of all the Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin to abrogation.

Count Benckendorff said that he would telegraph in this sense to his Government.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 855.

Sir Edward Grey to Count Mensdorff.

F.O. 15491/26/09/44A.

Your Excellency,

Foreign Office, April 27, 1909.

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Y[our] E[xcellency's] communication of the 20th instant,⁽¹⁾ in which you inform me of the views of the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t in regard to modifications in Article 29 of the Treaty of Berlin, and request to be informed whether H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are in agreement on the subject.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have noted with satisfaction that the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t assent to the suppression of paragraphs 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, of the Article in question: as to the proposal to replace paragraph 6 by another, stipulating that the port of Antivari shall preserve the character of a commercial port, and that no works shall be erected there to transform it into a military port, H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] have no objection in principle to such an arrangement. In this connection the declaration made by the Montenegrin Gov[ernmen]t to the Austro-Hungarian Representative at Cetinje would appear adequate: if, however, the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t wish to invest this clause with the character of a formal international stipulation, it would evidently be necessary that it should take the form of a Treaty modifying the Treaty of Berlin, and signed by the Plenipotentiaries of the Powers signatory of the Treaty of Berlin; this course would correspond to that adopted in 1871 in regard to the abrogation of articles 11, 13 and 14 of the Treaty of Paris and the substitution for them of a fresh article.

H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] understand, however, that the question of paragraph 4, which has been raised by the Turkish Gov[ernmen]t, still remains open for consideration.⁽²⁾

[I have, &c.
E. GREY.]

⁽¹⁾ [v. *supra*, p. 789, No. 847.]

⁽²⁾ [v. *supra*, pp. 779-80, Nos. 833-4.]

No. 856.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir A. Nicolson.

F.O. 15116/26/09/44.

(No. 132.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 28, 1909.

The Russian Ambassador called on the 19th instant and made a statement to the following effect:—

The Russian Gov[ernmen]t had given their consent to the suppression of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin on being informed that the Austro-Hungarian Gov[ernmen]t were ready to give their answer to the Italian note concerning Article 29.

[I am, &c.
E. GREY.]

No. 857.

Sir G. Buchanan to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 16590, 26/09/44A.

(No. 32.)

Sir,

*Sophia, D. April 28, 1909.**R. May 3, 1909.*

Now that the danger of a conflict has been removed by the signature of the Turco-Bulgarian Protocol and the consequent Recognition of Independence by the Powers, it is only necessary to refer briefly to the dangers, which seemed at one time to threaten the maintenance of peace.

When the first news of a reactionary outbreak at Constantinople reached Sofia, the Bulgarian Government believed that Turkey was in the throes of a Revolution and that, in order to be prepared for all eventualities, they would be forced to have recourse to a General Mobilization. Two days later they received a telegram from Monsieur Liaptcheff, announcing the constitution of the new Government under Tewfik Pasha and pointing out that the adoption of measures, calculated to arouse distrust, would compromise the success of the negotiations. The idea of mobilization was, therefore abandoned for the moment; but Monsieur Liaptcheff was instructed to inform the Porte that the negotiations must be brought to a speedy termination and that, if Independence were not recognized within the course of the next three or four days, he would have to return to Sofia. In a conversation, which I had with the President of the Council on the 15th of this month, His Excellency remarked that a rupture of the negotiations would restore full liberty of action to the Bulgarian Government and, though he did not specify the measures which they proposed to adopt in such an eventuality, he hinted that mobilization was one of those, which they would have to take into consideration. On my urging on His Excellency the necessity of exercising patience and on my enumerating the various dangers to which the Bulgarian Government would expose themselves, should they embark on a policy of adventure, Monsieur Malinoff assured me that they desired to act loyally by the Powers of the Triple *Entente*, to whom they already owed so much, and that they would take no serious decision, without previously communicating with those Powers.

On the following day I had a further interview with His Excellency and, in accordance with the instructions conveyed to me in your Telegram No. 85 of the 15th instant,⁽¹⁾ pressed him, but in vain, to accept arbitration for the settlement of the question of the private claims connected with Vakoufs. I have the honour to enclose a memorandum⁽¹⁾ drawn up by Mr. Consul McGregor, who kindly acted as interpreter, embodying the main points touched on in this conversation. On the 17th I again called on Monsieur Malinoff and communicated to him the substance of your Telegram No. 96 of the 16th of this month on the Vakouf question.⁽¹⁾ During the course of my visit His Excellency received a telegram from Monsieur Liaptcheff stating that an agreement had been arrived at on all points and that the private claims, above referred to, were to be left for examination by a Bulgarian Commission.

Late in the evening of the same day, the Chef du Cabinet of Prince Ferdinand informed the French and Russian Agents and myself of a new difficulty, which had arisen in consequence of Turkey having demanded a delay of 30 days for the Ratification of the Protocol. The President of the Council, Monsieur Dobrovitch said, had charged him to tell us that, if Turkey persisted in this demand and refused to recognize Independence, immediately after the signature of the Protocol, Monsieur Liaptcheff would leave Constantinople and Bulgaria would take such action, as she deemed best suited to her interests. Though no measures were actually adopted the question of a General Mobilization was seriously discussed in the Council of Ministers; but on being informed of the nature of the instructions, which were being sent to the Ambassadors of the three Powers at Constantinople, Monsieur Malinoff decided to await the result of their intervention.

(¹) [Not reproduced.]

The news of the signature of the Protocol was received here on the evening of the 19th instant, and on the following morning the President of the Council called at the Agency and requested me to convey to His Majesty's Government the warmest thanks of the Bulgarian Government for the services, which they had rendered Bulgaria in the matter of the signature of the Protocol and on the question of Recognition. In the course of the conversation, which ensued, I enquired whether I might, at the same time, give an assurance as to the pacific intentions of the Bulgarian Government. Monsieur Malinoff replied that the questions which were now agitating Turkey, were matters, which should be left for the Turks to settle between themselves. The Bulgarian Government did not, I might assure you, contemplate intervention. They would, on the contrary, do all in their power to induce their compatriots in Macedonia to co-operate loyally with the Turks, for the establishment of order and good government, and not to attempt to take advantage of their present difficulties.⁽²⁾ I have since conveyed to Monsieur Malinoff His Majesty's Government's appreciation of these assurances.⁽³⁾

While I have every reason to believe that these assurances have been given in perfect sincerity—as is, indeed, shown by the fact that, at the present moment, the Bulgarian Element in Macedonia is making common cause with the Young Turks for the defence of the Constitution—, Bulgaria's eventual attitude will, in great measure, be influenced by the march of events in Macedonia. Even now there is a party which considers that Bulgaria has lost an opportunity, which may never recur. Unless, however, Turkey becomes completely paralyzed by internal strife or unless anarchy and bloodshed reign in Macedonia, I do not apprehend active intervention on her part. The nation, which has been passing through a very severe and prolonged crisis, wants time to attend to its internal affairs; and Prince Ferdinand is probably looking forward to making the round of the Courts of Europe as an independent Sov[e]reign. Both His Royal Highness and His Government are, moreover, aware that, if Bulgaria moves into Macedonia, Austria will also march. Nor can they shut their eyes to the danger of confronting Turkey, with the Roumanian army mobilized in their rear. The language recently held to Sir C. Greene by the Roumanian Prime Minister, on the subject of the advisability of a collective action of the Powers at Sofia, corresponds with the views expressed to me by my German colleague almost at the same time. This fact, coupled with the recent visit of the German Crown Prince to Bucharest, seems to indicate that, as Prince Ferdinand once remarked to me, King Charles will always act as the Watchman of Germany and Austria-Hungary on the Danube.

I have only to add that the Independence of Bulgaria has now been recognized by all the Signatories of the Treaty of Berlin and that Roumania, Servia, Montenegro, Belgium and Greece have associated themselves in this step by offering their congratulations to King Ferdinand and the Bulgarian Government. In my Telegram No. 66 of the 27th instant⁽⁴⁾ I stated that the Italian Agent had announced the official Recognition of his Government on the morning of that day, and that the Austrian and German Agents would make a similar communication, on behalf of their respective Governments, the same afternoon. I find that this statement was not quite correct, as, though Monsieur Cucchi-Boasso informed the Chef du Cabinet of Prince Ferdinand of the fact yesterday morning, the three Agents made the official announcement to the Minister for Foreign Affairs collectively in the afternoon, in order to show the solidarity of the Triple Alliance.

I have, &c.

GEORGE W. BUCHANAN.

⁽²⁾ [*cp. supra*, p. 788, No. 843.]

⁽³⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 789, No. 845.]

⁽⁴⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 858.

Mr. Whitehead to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 16555, 16555, 09/39.

(No. 48.) Confidential.

Sir.

Belgrade, D. April 28, 1909.

R. May 3, 1909.

With reference to your Telegram No. 121 of the 15th instant.⁽¹⁾ I have the honour to report that M. Milovanovitch told me on the 15th instant that he had instructed the Servian Representative at Sofia to point out to the Bulgarian Government the desirability of a close *entente* between Servia and Bulgaria for the whole duration of the present Turkish crisis, and that he had also directed the Servian Representatives at Paris, St. Petersburg and London to ask the Governments to which they are accredited to urge the Bulgarian Government to accept this proposal.

His Excellency explained his idea in the sense that an *entente* of this kind would be a first step towards the realization of a Balkan Coalition, which would be the surest means of preventing a further Austro-German advance into the Peninsula. It would not be a menace to Turkey unless a state of complete anarchy supervened in that country, but it would enable Bulgaria to detach herself from Austria.

On my again objecting that I did not think Bulgaria had any special or definite understanding with Austria, he replied that this might be so, but that as they had recently been accomplices in successful breaches of the Berlin Treaty, this precedent might prove attractive and naturally suggest a repetition of the process. If Bulgaria and Austria made common cause against Turkey, whether on the plea of restoring order or otherwise, Servia would be completely helpless, and would be obliged, in order to save anything from the fray, to make a complete surrender to Austria and join hands with her. As regards Roumania, he thought a Serbo-Bulgarian *entente* would be welcome to her, because any advantages which these two countries might gain would be shared between them, and the balance of Power among the Balkan States would be more nearly maintained than by a one sided aggrandisement of Bulgaria, which Roumania would be bound to resist.⁽²⁾

On the 20th instant I had some conversation with Monsieur Novakovitch, the Prime Minister, who said that in the event of a complete anarchy supervening in Turkey, and the Christian population of Old Servia and the Sanjak of Novi Bazar being attacked by the Albanians, it would be very difficult for the Servian Government to refrain from taking active military measures for their protection. He had recently spoken to Count Forgach on this subject, and had asked him what the attitude of Austria would be in that eventuality. Count Forgach had replied evasively, saying that he did not know the views of his Government in the matter and could not answer for them. Since then my French Colleague has expressed to me the opinion that Count Forgach, being a Hungarian, would not object to Servia engaging herself in an adventure southwards, which would divert her attention from the Serbs under Hungarian rule but that he thought that Baron von Aehrenthal might have different views.

On the 23rd instant I again saw Monsieur Milovanovitch, who told me that, in reply to Monsieur Simitch's advances the Bulgarian Government had asked for a clear statement of what the Servian Government had in view with the proposed *entente*. To this demand Monsieur Milovanovitch had demurred, on the ground, as he expressed it to me, that he wished to enter into conversation with Bulgaria but not to be called upon to excite [*sic*] a monologue. His Excellency still hoped that the proposed negotiations would be gradually proceeded with, and would lead to a satisfactory result, but the urgency of the matter had for the moment passed, as it seemed clear that the Young Turks had definitely gained the upper hand and that there was little likelihood of a civil war.

(1) [Not reproduced.]

(2) [Marginal comment by Mr. A. Parker, "Not very convincing. A. P."]

Meanwhile His Excellency assured me that no military measures whatsoever had been taken by Serbia on the Turkish frontier, and that none were intended. He had heard of the assurances supposed to have been given to Enver Bey by Baron von Aehrenthal (as reported in Sir E. Goschen's Telegram No. 51 of the 20th instant)⁽²⁾ from the Servian Consuls in Macedonia, and thought that this rumour, the truth of which he had no means of verifying, had been spread by the Young Turks for reasons of internal policy.

I have, &c.

J. B. WHITEHEAD.

⁽²⁾ [*v. supra*, p. 788, No. 844.]

No. 859.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

F.O. 17002/26/09/44.

(No. 199.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 30, 1909.

M. Cambon said to me to-day that apparently M. Iswolsky still clung to the idea of a Conference.

M. Cambon heard that Sir Charles Hardinge had suggested, as his personal opinion, that a Protocol drawn up by the Ambassadors at Constantinople to register the alterations made in the Treaty of Berlin would be the most convenient course. M. Cambon had himself independently arrived at this conclusion, and had suggested it to M. Pichon, who agreed with him. If a Conference took place, Greece, Serbia, and other countries might take the opportunity of agitating to have various claims considered.

I said that the alterations in a great international Treaty such as that of Berlin ought to be recorded in some formal manner. At present, there was nothing to point to with regard to the alterations, except various more or less informal Notes, nothing had yet been drawn up and properly signed by the Treaty Powers. I agreed that a Protocol drawn up by the Ambassadors would be the most convenient way of arranging a settlement.

On enquiring from Sir C. Hardinge it appears that he had not mentioned Constantinople and that in the conversation which was entirely informal he had expressed a preference for Paris or failing that for Rome as the place of meeting.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 860.

Sir Charles Hardinge to Sir A. Nicolson.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Nicolson,

Foreign Office, May 10, 1909.

Very many thanks for your letter of the 6th.

I cannot help smiling at Tcharykoff having discovered anything astute in the agreement of Russia to the suppression of Article 25, especially after all the Powers have agreed to it. I hear from Cambon that Isvolsky is still very keen on a Conference. That is not at all our way of thinking. We fully realize that it may be necessary to have a meeting of Ambassadors somewhere or other to regularize the situation; but we are very anxious that it should not be a Conference, where all sorts of tiresome questions—such as the Cretan question and that of the Capitulations—would inevitably be raised. If Isvolsky imagines that he is going

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

to induce Austria to agree to the substitution of a fresh Article dealing with these two Provinces in a sense favourable to Russian or Slav aspirations, I am quite convinced that he is making a very great mistake, and that, in doing so, he would expose himself to yet another rebuff from the two central Powers. These demonstrations of Russian impotence should be avoided at all costs, and it is astonishing to me that Isvolsky should lay himself open to them.

We were greatly interested in your telegram reporting your interview with Stolypine. I hope he may remain, but I fear that he is not a man to show any weakness, or to yield to the Emperor's solicitations. I hear from Cambon that Touchard explains that, although the Emperor is strongly in favour of the Triple *Entente*, he does not understand that a reactionary Government in Russia must necessarily lean on Germany, since it would not be sympathetic to either France or England. He says that the Emperor believes that the *entente* would remain the same, whatever Government should be in power in Russia. This, as you know, is an absurd mistake, since a reactionary Government in Russia would meet with no sympathy at all in this country, and it would be impossible to draw closer to Russia in any way while such a Government was in power. Provided Stolypine remains in office, I do not think it is so essential that Isvolsky should remain. I quite realize and agree with you in thinking that he has been extremely useful to us in many ways during his term of office. He has made an agreement with us, and has been loyal throughout; but he is not a statesman and his tactics have certainly been bad.⁽²⁾

Yours ever,

CHARLES HARDINGE.

(2) [The rest of this letter deals with other matters and is unimportant.]

No. 861.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir C. Hardinge.

Vienna, July 4, 1909.

Private.⁽¹⁾

D. 7.10 P.M.

Tel.

R. 8.30 P.M.

Your private tel[egram] of yesterday.

In official and press circles and in society the hope is universally expressed that the King may see his way to meet the Emperor this summer. Two days ago I mentioned to the U[nder] S[ecretary] of State for F[oreign] A[ffairs] that I understood from your letter to me that it was pretty certain that the King would go to Marienbad. He at once enquired about Ischl. On my replying that the King would probably not go to Ischl he expressed great disappointment. If the king avoids going to Ischl this year every one will interpret it to mean that H[is] M[ajesty] still harbours some resentment against this country for having caused the late crisis and also on account of the bitter press campaign of the winter. Baron von Aehrenthal is, I believe, sincerely desirous of drawing closer to England and France in Balkan questions and he hopes that in time (group undecypherable) same towards Russia. Baron von Aehrenthal desires a sign understood by the public at large that the crisis of last winter is over and that it has not impaired the traditional good relations between England and Austria. This sign would be the King's visit to Ischl. Such is the Austrian view of the question.

The advantages to Great Britain of asking the King to undergo the fatigue of a journey to Ischl are less evident. The visit would, no doubt, however, still further improve the relations between the two countries and it might perhaps be

(1) [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

useful to exchange views at a moment when owing to the withdrawal of the troops from Crete the Balkans may be passing through another acute crisis.

Naval attaché who has just returned from the launch of battleship at Trieste tells me that Austrian naval officers universally expressed regret to him at enmity of England against Austria. This idea is moreover universal through all classes here and the visit of the King to Ischl may do much to destroy it.

No. 862.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, July 15, 1909.

Private.⁽¹⁾

D. 6.50 P.M.

Tel.

R. 7.45 P.M.

I saw Aehrenthal this afternoon on his return to Vienna, and we had some conversation about the possible visit of the King to Ischl.

I spoke to him in the sense of Sir C. Hardinge's private letter to me of July 9 and stated that the King's friendship for the Emperor was so well known that a visit to Ischl was scarcely necessary to reaffirm it. Aehrenthal replied that a visit this year after the crisis of the winter w[oul]d have a most beneficial influence on public opinion in this country. He declared that it would do more than anything to destroy a pernicious legend circulated in the press of Austria and Germany to the effect that the visit last year at Ischl resulted in a coolness between the two sovereigns.

I enquired of H[is] E[xcellency] whether he c[oul]d throw any light as to what the Emperor's views were in regard to such a visit. He replied that he knew H[is] M[ajesty's] mind well enough to be able to assure me that the visit would give him the greatest pleasure and that the King would be most heartily welcomed by H[is] M[ajesty].

I begged Aehrenthal to consider our conversation as quite confidential and unofficial as I was not authorised to make any proposals on the subject of a visit to Ischl.

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

No. 863.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, July 17, 1909.

Private.⁽¹⁾

D. 8.30 P.M.

Tel.

R. 9.30 P.M.

Your private tel[egram] of yesterday.

In the absence of M[inister for] F[oreign] A[ffairs] I have seen Secretary of State who was already informed of my conversation with Baron von Aehrenthal on Thursday with regard to the King's visit to Ischl⁽²⁾ [*sic*]. To prevent all misunderstanding I repeated to him that I had every reason to believe that the King was not indisposed to pay his visit if the Emperor invited him to do so. Without an invitation I did not see how His Majesty could go but I added that if the visit did not take place, this should not be interpreted here as indicating any ill-will on the part of His Majesty towards Austria-Hungary.

Under S[ecretary] of S[tate] for F[oreign] A[ffairs] said that he feared that a section of the press would incline to that interpretation. I enquired whether

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]

(²) [*v.* immediately preceding document.]

exchange of friendly telegrams on Emperor's birthday might not have similar reassuring effect on the public as a visit to Ischl. He replied that it would produce good effect but not so much as a visit.

I requested him to report to Baron von Aehrenthal that I was convinced that unless the King was invited by the Emperor to come to Ischl he could not go and that matter therefore rested in Emperor's hands.

No. 864.

Sir F. Bertie to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 29364/29364/09/38A.

(No. 317.)

Sir,

Paris, D. August 4, 1909.

R. August 5, 1909.

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith, extracted from the "Temps" of to-day's date, a leading article on Anglo-Russian relations.⁽¹⁾ It points out that although the reconciliation between England and Russia was the work of historic necessity it was undoubtedly hastened by the King and by M. Izvolsky. The latter statesman saw when he came into power that the time for an Anglo-Russian *rapprochement* had arrived. The Japanese war had shown Russia what it costs a great empire arbitrarily to displace its centre of gravity, and she could not fail to remember that German counsels had always persuaded her to move on to the Far East. Was it not Bismarck who maintained that Russia's mission was in Asia? Was it not M. de Brandt, German Minister in China, who in 1880 in the Kouldja affair egged on his Russian colleague, M. Koyander? Was it not the occupation of Kiao-Chou by Prince Henry of Prussia which brought on that of Port Arthur and thus gave the example of the break up of China which was the primary cause of the Russo-Japanese war? The Anglo-Russian Agreement which was concluded when Russia had abandoned the Asiatic mirage had contributed towards the maintenance of general peace. For France herself the reconciliation had been of incalculable value. For more than half a-century Anglo-Russian rivalry had been the favourite weapon of Prussia and Germany against France. Bismarck had played this card from the Crimean War to the war of 1870. In conclusion the article draws attention to the toasts exchanged at Cowes and to the allusions therein made to parliamentary institutions in Russia.

The "Matin" of to-day publishes a leading article by its editor M. Stéphane Lauzanne, giving the text of a declaration made to him by M. Pichon on the subject of the relations between France and Russia, stating that the two Governments are in the most absolute agreement not only on general questions of international policy, but even with regard to the smallest details and to possible eventualities.

M. Lauzanne also comments on the passages in the speeches made at Cowes which refer to the representatives of the Duma. I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the article in question.⁽¹⁾

I have, &c.

FRANCIS BERTIE.

⁽¹⁾ [Not reproduced.]

No. 865.

Mr. O'Beirne to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 30733/23876/09/38.

(No. 463.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. August 7, 1909.

R. August 16, 1909.

I have had the honour to transmit to you, under cover of my despatch No. 452 of the 3rd instant and later despatches, summaries of the most noticeable articles

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published by the St. Petersburg press on the subject of the Emperor's visit to Cowes. As you will have seen, the comments made on the occasion by all the more important newspapers indicate unreserved adherence to the policy of the Anglo-Russian *entente*, and the warmest approval of an event which tends to strengthen it. The papers which speak in this way include organs of widely different political opinions. Adverse comments on the other hand are practically confined to two or three journals of the most violent reactionary type, such as the organ of the "Union of the Russian People" and others of the same stamp, to which it is needless to say that people here pay very little attention. Even these papers have been noticed to be distinctly less aggressive than was the case on the occasion of the King's visit to Reval in June of last year; and in the same way we find a less extreme but still strongly conservative paper like the "Svet," which a year ago spoke of England as the traditional enemy, now referring to the value of Anglo-Russian friendship, though arguing, it is true, that hitherto the benefits of that friendship have all been on the side of England.

I must say that conversations which I have had with many different sorts of people have tended to confirm the impression which one derives from the press comments that the Anglo-Russian *entente* has made its way considerably in Russian public opinion during the past twelve months. One does not of course expect that those Russians who are convinced advocates of a policy of closer relations with Germany should have changed their way of thinking from one year to the next. But I believe that there are many Russians who, without any predilections in favour of a German *rapprochement*, used to feel a good deal of scepticism and indifference towards the understanding with England, and who have now come to regard the *entente* more as a reality, and better to appreciate the value it may have for Russia. That such should be the case is all the more satisfactory in view of the disappointing results, so far as Russia was concerned, achieved by the co-operation of the three Powers in the Balkans question last winter. But there has been singularly little disposition in Russia, either in the press or in other quarters, to minimise the value of the support received from England in the stress of the Eastern crisis. The only suggestion of this kind which I have met with in recent press comments occurs in the article from the "Svet" to which I have alluded above, and the "Svet" immediately adds that Russia never asked for a more active kind of support than that which she received. I think the general inclination of Russians is fully to appreciate the constant diplomatic assistance which Russia did receive from England throughout the negotiations.

The satisfaction caused in Russia by the welcome accorded to the Emperor at Cowes has not I think been marred to any considerable extent by the protests raised in certain quarters in England against the visit. It was inevitable that these protests should come in for a good deal of attention here, but I do not believe that any one attached an exaggerated importance to their significance, and a very good effect was produced by M. Iswolsky's statement that they served only to throw into relief the sentiments of the great majority of Englishmen.

The Cowes meeting has naturally been considered by Russian Liberals largely in its bearing on the internal politics of the country, and it has been interesting to note the intense satisfaction with which they learnt of the King's reference to the visit of the Duma members, and the Emperor's remarks in reply. It has been much desired here in liberal circles that the Emperor should touch on this subject, but it was believed—and I am informed with good reason—that His Majesty had been advised in a contrary sense. It has therefore been generally and gratefully assumed that it was owing to the King's initiative that the Emperor spoke the words which have given so much encouragement to the supporters of constitutional principles in Russia. The effect which they have produced here has been very marked. Previous to the pronouncement of the toasts the opposition press was inclined to resent the assertion, made in England in reply to opponents of the visit, that it was after all the Emperor who had bestowed a Constitution on Russia; and papers like the

"Retch" were very ready to point to the numerous instances in which the existing methods of government are anything but constitutional. Since the toasts were spoken these papers have adopted a different and more hopeful tone, declaring that the seal has now been placed on the grant of a constitution, and that for the first time a Russian monarch has appeared before Europe as a constitutional sovereign.

I am told that on the other hand, as might have been expected, there is a corresponding amount of dissatisfaction among Russian conservatives of the old fashioned school; for although the Emperor did not use the term "Constitution" His Majesty's words savoured too much of Constitutionalism for the taste of politicians of this way of thinking. It is indeed a curious fact that at the present moment three fourths of the Russians in political life are prepared to deny that Russia is in the enjoyment of a constitution. The Right say that a constitution was never granted because at the time of the October manifesto the principle of Autocracy was preserved. The Left say that a Constitution was granted, but that the concession was never carried into effect, because Ministers are not responsible to parliament and because exceptional laws are in force throughout the country. To a disinterested observer it would seem that the demand for the introduction of a *régime* of ordinary law is in the main justified. It is moreover perfectly evident that that result will not be secured by the legislation which is now pending in the Duma: for whatever legislation may be eventually adopted, it will necessarily leave it to the discretion of the Executive to suspend constitutional guarantees for an indefinite period. The result desired could no doubt be attained by the establishment of ministerial responsibility; but that is a concession which the Emperor cannot be expected to make and many moderate men would agree that the country is hardly ripe for it. The best hope of an advance in the direction indicated lies therefore in the growth of constitutional ideas and of a liberal spirit among the governing classes, and it is in this respect that the development of Anglo Russian and Franco Russian relations may best promote the cause of constitutionalism in Russia.

I have, &c.

HUGH O'BEIRNE.

No. 866.

Sir Edward Grey to Mr. O'Beirne.

F.O. 30512/23876/09/38.

(No. 234.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 11, 1909.

Count Benckendorff, in the course of conversation with me to-day, expressed great satisfaction with the visit to Cowes.

I most heartily agreed, and said I had been very much pleased by the evidently strong and sincere gratification which the Emperor had expressed as to the satisfactory working of the Anglo-Russian Convention and as to the good relations which existed between the two countries.

[I am, &c.]

E. G[REY].

No. 867.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir E. Goschen.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Goschen,

Berlin, September 1, 1909.

I have sent you a telegram today which has the approval of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. There is nothing in our agreements with France and Russia which

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 22.]

is directed against Germany, and therefore nothing to bar a friendly arrangement with Germany. But we have no general political understanding formulated either with Russia or France; and to do with Germany what has not been done with Russia and France would look as if we were intending to change friends. I want a good understanding with Germany, but it must be one which will not imperil those which we have with France and Russia.

I should have thought some formula could be found to which they might also be parties: that would be the best and most reassuring solution, though I see that the French could not be a party to anything which looked like confirming the loss of Alsace and Lorraine.

The bag is leaving and I have no time to do more than to enclose a copy of some rough notes⁽²⁾ which I made yesterday to clear my own mind and which show to what my thoughts tend.

Yours sincerely,

E. GREY.

(²) [Not reproduced.]

No. 868.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 33810/30980/09/3.

(No. 142.)

Sir,

Vienna, D. September 5, 1909.

R. September 8, 1909.

I returned to Vienna from Marienbad yesterday morning and in the afternoon I had an interview with Count Aehrenthal. He at once inquired after the King's health and I was glad to be in a position to assure him that the Marienbad cure had greatly benefited His Majesty, and that Dr. Ott had declared to me that he had never seen the King in a better state of health than at present. Count Aehrenthal remarked that he was delighted to hear this and that the King's visit to Marienbad seemed not only to have benefited His Majesty's health but had also benefited the relations between Great Britain and Austria-Hungary, for had the King not gone to the Austrian watering place this year a feeling would have generally prevailed in this country that he had been restrained from going there by political motives alone. Count Aehrenthal then referred to the mission of Mr. Walsh to Ischl who was charged to deliver an autograph letter from the King and a bust of His Majesty to the Emperor Franz Joseph on the occasion of his birthday; he assured me that the Emperor had been deeply touched by this mark of attention and friendship on the part of the King, and that the mission of Mr. Walsh, combined with the exchange of friendly telegrams during the King's visit to Marienbad, had contributed more than anything to put an end to the pernicious legend—so widespread among the public—that a coolness had resulted between the two Sovereigns as a consequence of last year's interview at Ischl.

Count Aehrenthal then turned to the political relations between Austria-Hungary and England. He said that few things had given him more pleasure than to notice the great and rapid improvement which had taken place in these relations within the last few months, and he declared that it was his ardent wish that they should continue to improve, and that all his efforts would be directed to bring this about. It was in the interest of the two countries that they should not find themselves in antagonism to each other. He repeated to me that in his opinion the friction which had arisen between them over the Bosnian question was mainly to be attributed to misunderstandings which had been increased in a most unfortunate manner by the tone of the press on both sides. His Excellency was glad to note that the Austro-Hungarian and the English press had of late shown a moderation of tone in criticising each other which augured well for the future.

His Excellency made no direct reference to the "Times" leading article of the 30th ultimo on the relations between England and Austria-Hungary, but he mentioned to me that he had received a letter from Prince Kinsky, dated from Marienbad, in which allusion was made to King Edward's friendly feelings towards this country. I happen to know that this letter was written by the Prince with special reference to the article in the "Times," and therefore Count Aehrenthal's enigmatical phrase to me at this moment of the conversation:—"je cherche à faire une politique de la monarchie" seems to me to be of special interest as the concluding sentence of the "Times" article referred to a hope that Austria-Hungary would develop an individuality of her own in the conduct of international politics without, however, expecting her to abandon her alliance with Germany.

Twice in the course of the conversation Count Aehrenthal said to me that he wished to have a good understanding with Great Britain, as the interests of both countries in the Near East seemed to be identical and could only be benefitted by such an understanding. He said to me that both Great Britain and Austria-Hungary desired the continuance of the present *régime* at Constantinople if it could possibly be maintained. He understood that you wished to give it full moral support and he entirely agreed with you, but he seemed to go a step further, and that was that he desired to do nothing which could in any way injure the real interests or even the prestige of the Ottoman Empire, and he then alluded to the situation in Macedonia. He here observed that the position of Europe towards Macedonian affairs was no longer the same as it was at the time of the Berlin Congress, or even under the rule of Abdul Hamid. Europe had not only recognised the new Turkish *régime* but public sentiment in most civilised countries demanded that a free hand should be given to the Young Turks to put their house in order without being exposed to the continual annoyance of receiving advice from the Powers, or of interference by them in the internal affairs of Turkey. Things were no more what they had been a few years ago: Europe could no longer take up the Macedonian question and insist upon reforms being introduced into that province; those reforms must now come from the central authorities in Constantinople. Non-interference by the Powers in Turkish internal affairs seems to me to be the key-note of Count Aehrenthal's policy at the present moment.

I inquired of Count Aehrenthal whether he had any information with regard to recent troubles in Albania. He replied that there had been some encounters between the Turkish Authorities and Albanians who objected to pay the new taxes, but he did not attribute any great importance to these events. Count Aehrenthal told me that Austria-Hungary claimed a kind of protectorate over certain Roman Catholic Albanian tribes, but he declared that he would not make use of this excuse for interfering in Albanian affairs which, he thought, had better be left to be settled between the Turks and the Albanians themselves.

In the course of the conversation Count Aehrenthal said to me that of late he had grown a little more confident as to the stability of the new *régime* in Turkey, at least he thought that for the moment the Young Turk *régime* had strengthened its position. Until the month of July he had been very pessimistic with regard to the situation in Turkey as he had expected that at any moment a reactionary movement might have set in; this danger had passed away and therefore it was all the more necessary for the Great Powers to be very careful to avoid doing anything which might shake the prestige of the new *régime* in Turkey.

I have, &c.

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 869.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 35759/35759/09/18.

(No. 513.) Confidential.

St. Petersburg, D. September 18, 1909.

Sir,

R. September 27, 1909.

Monsieur Iswolsky returned here on the 16th instant and I called upon him this afternoon. He told me that on his way through Berlin he had met Monsieur de Bethmann-Hollweg at dinner at the Russian Embassy. He had been favourably impressed with Monsieur de Bethmann-Hollweg as a man of calm temperament, well informed on foreign affairs, and he should think determined to take his office as Chancellor seriously. He had not the vivacity and charm of Prince Bülow, but was cautious and somewhat reserved and apparently trustworthy. Monsieur Iswolsky said that he had spoken frankly to the Chancellor as to the relations between Great Britain and Russia, and had stated positively that the understanding between the two countries was directed neither against Germany nor against any other Power, and that neither at Reval not [*sic*] at Cowes had anything passed which could be construed into an intention to form a combination hostile to any European Power. Monsieur Iswolsky said that he had repeated what he had oftentimes said to German statesmen on previous occasions; but he did not flatter himself that he had been able to remove the suspicions which had been implanted in the German mind, and which doubtless had been inherited by the new Chancellor. He had explained to the latter that the understanding originally limited to certain specific questions had developed into closer relations simply owing to the fact that the two Governments had complete confidence in each other. During the critical phases of the Persian question, for instance, the confidence between you and him had enabled both countries to steer through very troubled waters without any collision; and this harmony had naturally assisted both Governments in other questions outside of Persia. Had this happy condition of mutual confidence existed between Austria-Hungary and Russia many of the perils and anxieties of past months could never have arisen; and the outlook for the future would be more serene. During ten years Russia had loyally observed her compact with Austria, and it was not till this compact had been rudely shaken by Count d'Aehrenthal that the breach opened and widened between the two countries. It was impossible for Russian statesmen to feel any confidence in Count d'Aehrenthal, and the policy of that statesman even at present seemed to tend towards creating dissensions and distrust between the Balkan States. He could not regard it as a pacific policy. Russia was anxious to see the new *régime* in Turkey consolidate itself, as the Russian Government considered that the stronger Turkey became the more hopeful would be the prospects of peace being maintained in South Eastern Europe.

Monsieur de Bethmann-Hollweg had expressed the hope that the relations between Austria-Hungary and Russia would improve as time progressed, and stated as his belief that, in any case during the lifetime of the Emperor Franz Josef, Austria would remain quiescent. Monsieur Iswolsky considered that this "belief" was not a very substantial guarantee; and it was evident that he is still possessed with great mistrust of Count d'Aehrenthal's policy and aims.

I asked Monsieur Iswolsky whether the Chancellor had referred to the internal situation in Germany, and whether he had let fall any remarks which might indicate a desire to restrict expenditure on naval armaments. His Excellency said that no allusion had been made to these matters.

Monsieur Iswolsky added that he had gathered from certain well-informed quarters that it was anticipated that Count d'Aehrenthal would play a conspicuous, if not a predominant, part on the continent in European politics, and that the German Chancellor would not be in the same position as his predecessor in his relations with the director of Austrian foreign policy. He was of opinion that this anticipation, if it were founded on the supposed inexperience or want of character

on the part of the German Chancellor, would be falsified. So far as he could judge from an evening's conversation Monsieur de Bethmann-Hollweg was not at all a man who would be content to play a secondary part, as he gave him the impression of having a considerable reserve of strength of character and of will.

Monsieur Iswolsky said that Monsieur de Bethmann-Hollweg had complained of the tone of the Russian Press towards Germany: but he had pointed out to the Chancellor that the socialist Press in Germany had surpassed the English and French radical papers in the virulence and violence of their attacks on the Emperor and the Russian Government. The latter took no notice of these attacks as they were aware that they did not represent the views of the sober majority of the countries.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 870.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Charles Hardinge.

Private.⁽¹⁾

Very Confidential.

My dear Hardinge,

British Embassy, Vienna, September 20, 1909.

I have just returned from Venice where I spent a few days as things were quiet here. There I met Iswolsky, and I told him that I had just seen Aehrenthal, whereupon he asked me to call upon him, which I did. The interview lasted over an hour and what passed between us is of sufficient interest to warrant my reporting it to you.

Iswolsky began by a long defence of his conduct, starting from the time anterior to the Sanjak railway business. He made out very plausibly that he had always behaved in a straightforward and loyal manner towards Austria, but that he had been deceived outrageously by Aehrenthal at every turn, in fact he described himself as the innocent lamb who had been destroyed by the wicked wolf. Consequently his wrath against Aehrenthal seems to be quite unbridled. He described the Austrian Minister as shift and unreliable, and as "un digne élève des Jésuites."

According to Iswolsky towards the end of the year 1907 he had elaborated with Aehrenthal a scheme for Macedonian judicial reforms—"ligne par ligne et virgule par virgule"; this scheme was ready to be laid before the Sultan, when the Sanjak railway concession was sprung upon Russia and Iswolsky discovered that Aehrenthal had been bargaining behind his back with the Porte to obtain this concession in return for a promise that neither Germany nor Austria would seriously press forward the Macedonian reform scheme upon the Sultan. How far all this is a strictly true version of what took place on that occasion, I will not pretend to say, but if Iswolsky had really thought that he had been done in this matter, he ought to have been doubly careful in striking future bargains relating to Balkan questions with Aehrenthal. However, according to Iswolsky's account to me, he went to Buchlau to talk matters over with Aehrenthal in a most loyal and trustful spirit. He said to me that there he and Aehrenthal went over all Balkan questions, and that the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina was merely alluded to as a possibility in the somewhat distant future. In discussing these Near Eastern questions, Iswolsky alluded to the interest Russia had in obtaining the opening of the Dardanelles, but he did not bring this forward as a distinct demand, leaving it to the far future, just as he imagined Aehrenthal intended to do with the Bosnian annexation question. In any case Iswolsky asserted that he impressed upon Aehrenthal that the question of the Bosnian annexation was one which had to be decided by the European Powers and not by Austria and Turkey alone. Russia, he said, taking into consideration anterior engagements with Austria, would personally raise no

⁽¹⁾ [Carnock MSS.]

objections to the annexation should the question be brought before a European Conference. He obtained from Aehrenthal a similar assurance that Austria would raise no opposition whenever Russia should apply to the Powers for the opening of the Dardanelles. Finally, Isvolsky declared to me that it was so well understood by Aehrenthal at Buchlau that a Conference would be necessary to deal with these matters that before they separated an understanding was arrived at as to the place where this Conference should meet. In addition Aehrenthal seems to have promised Isvolsky that before he proceeded with the annexation of Bosnia, he would warn Isvolsky of his intention to do so. Isvolsky said to me that Aehrenthal had kept his promise in his usual shifty manner, for Isvolsky had—on arriving in Paris—received the news of the annexation together with Aehrenthal's letter announcing his intention of annexing the two Provinces.

I may here recall to your memory that from the information which I have been able to collect since I have been here it would appear that before the Royal meeting at Reval, last year, Isvolsky had exchanged views with the Vienna Cabinet with regard to the Bosnian annexation, and that in the early part of last year he was hesitating whether he was to lean towards England or towards Austria in his Near Eastern policy.

In the course of my long interview with Isvolsky he more than once said to me that he was quite convinced that an understanding with Austria-Hungary was a necessity for Russia if she was to safeguard her real interests in the Near East. If the two Powers were working independently of each other there, "*elles pourront toujours être nuisibles l'une à l'autre.*" He regretted therefore that for the moment he saw no possibility of improving the present relations between the two countries: they were just now correct—strictly correct—and nothing more. As long as Aehrenthal remained in Office, it was impossible for him—Isvolsky—or for the Czar, who mistrusted Aehrenthal, to have any dealings with this Minister. An understanding with such a person, especially in the present very delicate state of affairs in the Near East, would not be tolerated by public opinion in Russia.

I said to Isvolsky that I quite agreed with him that if peace was to be maintained in the Near East, it was absolutely necessary that the relations between Austria and Russia should be materially improved, for it was only by a unity of action of those two Powers in the Balkans that it would be possible to prevent the little States there from taking sides according to their temporary interests with one or the other of these two Powers. Isvolsky answered that he fully recognized the truth of this, but he observed that the stumbling-block to a "*rapprochement*" between Russia and Austria was Aehrenthal. According to him, Aehrenthal was vigorously intriguing among the little Balkan States, preventing a good understanding between Bulgaria and Servia—pushing Bulgaria upon Macedonia—Roumania upon Bulgaria, &c. I pointed out to him that it seemed to me that it did not require any intrigues on the part of Aehrenthal to keep up friction between Bulgaria and Servia, as those two countries disliked each other so cordially that if they were only left to themselves their relations to each other would always be indifferent. Milovanovitch had quite recently told me that it was out of the question to bring about an understanding between Bulgaria and Servia, for the policy pursued by the former was too selfish and unreliable to form the basis for a good understanding between them. As regards Roumania I told Isvolsky what Bratiano had said to me (see my despatch No. 126, July 28th last),⁽²⁾ and Aehrenthal's advice to him not to rush into adventures and to keep quiet as regards Bulgaria. As to Macedonia, I said to Isvolsky that I had every reason to believe that both Austria and Germany were determined to do nothing which could in any way hurt the prestige or shake the stability of the present "*régime*" at Constantinople. Isvolsky replied that he hoped I was well informed but that his own information went to show that Aehrenthal was intriguing all over the place and was seeking to raise trouble in the Balkans.

(2) [Not reproduced.]

In the course of the conversation Isvolsky alluded to the so-called German ultimatum delivered at St. Petersburg during the height of the Servian crisis. He complained to me of the distorted accounts of it which had appeared in the European press. He asserted that nothing approaching to an ultimatum had been delivered to him: in fact, Germany had acted in a friendly spirit and had merely declared that if war broke out between Austria and Russia it would be very difficult for her not to stand by her ally. She had no desire to see war break out between Russia and Austria, and still less desire to see war having to break out between herself and her friendly neighbour Russia. In fact, according to Isvolsky's account, Pourtalès came to Isvolsky like a cooing dove bearing a message of peace. To such communication Isvolsky found himself compelled to reply in a most civil manner.

I stated to Isvolsky that during the Servian crisis I had gathered from conversations which I had had with leading persons here that the Austro-Hungarian Government were convinced that, should war break out with Servia, and then with Russia, the Austro-Hungarian armies would be in a position to deal single-handed with the Russian army and prevent the latter from invading Galicia without the assistance of Germany. Isvolsky replied that the world had been greatly misinformed as to the real state of the Russian army; he recognized that it was no doubt far from satisfactory and unable to face the German army, but quite strong enough to inflict a lesson upon Austria. On my mentioning to him that the Austrian Staff had expected that Servia would be conquered within three weeks' time, Isvolsky replied "we expected them to get to Nish in even less time than that."

The impression left upon my mind by my long conversation with Isvolsky is that his hatred of Aehrenthal is so bitter that any "rapprochement" between Russia and Austria-Hungary is for the moment out of the question. Aehrenthal, on the other hand, I have every reason to believe, would welcome any drawing nearer to Russia.

Perhaps some of the above may be of interest to Nicolson, in which case I hope you will let him have a copy of this letter, as I am not writing to him directly on the subject of my interview with Isvolsky.

Yours truly,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

No. 871.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, November 2, 1909.

You will see from my telegram and despatch that Isvolsky has returned well satisfied with his interview at Racconigi. He told me that the long detour which was made to avoid Austria was not adopted at his suggestion. He found on arriving at Livadia, prior to the journey, that the Emperor had already decided on the itinerary, and that he indeed had endeavoured to persuade the Emperor not to take a route which so evidently showed a desire to avoid Austria. He had observed that the journey through Austrian territory could be made incognito and need not entail official receptions, &c. But the Emperor would not modify his itinerary, as he was "profondément froissé" with Austria. Isvolsky wishes to disclaim all responsibility for the route adopted. I should doubt if he exercised much pressure on the Emperor to change his plans: but my French colleague, Louis, thinks that Isvolsky would not be indisposed to reopen conversations with Vienna—perhaps not directly with d'Aehrenthal, but indirectly through Tittoni. I do not share this opinion; and I don't quite see what the two would have to talk about. Moreover Isvolsky emphasized to Tittoni the distrust he felt towards d'Aehrenthal, and I much doubt after his past experiences, and knowing the feelings of the Emperor and of public

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

opinion here, that he would venture, at present at any rate, to recommence conversations with his Austrian colleague. His aim is to secure the co-operation of Italy in any future developments which may occur in the Balkans, and to encourage the Balkan States to draw closer to each other. From the general tenour of his conversation, and Louis carried away the same impression, I think that he feels that his own position is firmer than it was. He talked as a man who felt that he was secure in his seat for some time to come.

He spoke to Louis, as he did to me, of the poor opinion held by Tittoni in regard to the new régime in Turkey. So far as I could judge he was not himself very agreeably impressed with the attitude of Rifaat Pasha, who, as he expressed it to me, was suffering from a "swollen head."⁽²⁾

Yours sincerely,
A. NICOLSON.

⁽²⁾ [The rest of this despatch refers to Russian relations with Turkey.]

No. 872.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

Private.⁽¹⁾

My dear Grey,

St. Petersburg, November 10, 1909.

Monsieur Iswolsky is very indignant and offended at an article entitled "Monsieur Iswolsky and Count d'Aehrenthal—a rectification" which appeared in the November number of the *Fortnightly Review*.⁽²⁾ I have forwarded in a despatch an official communiqué which has been published here on the subject. I think there is little doubt from internal evidence that the article was written by Dr. Dillon who has quite recently been visiting Count Berchtold at Buchlau. In any case Monsieur Iswolsky considers that it is most improper—he uses much stronger language—that extracts from a secret memorandum should be communicated to a journalist, and that a totally erroneous impression should therefore be conveyed as to the substance and tenure [*sic*] of the document. He describes this method of procedure as "political blackmail," a "stab in the back" and such like epithets. From the article in the *Fortnightly* it would be assumed that Russia, or rather Iswolsky, had proposed to d'Aehrenthal that Austria-Hungary should annex Bosnia and Herzegovina and also the Novi-Bazar Sanjak. This is contrary to the fact. M. Iswolsky yesterday said he would read to me the whole of the secret memorandum of June 19, 1908, and he begged me to give him my personal opinion after that I had heard the contents whether there was any justification for the statements in the *Fortnightly* article. He explained to me that after the Sanjak railway question had been brought forward it was necessary for the two Governments to review the various understandings, &c. which had previously taken place between the two Governments, and to see in what measure they were affected by the railway scheme, and in fact that the two Governments should know exactly how they stood. A confidential interchange of memoranda then ensued, and the memorandum of June 19 was the reply to one from the Vienna Cabinet dated I think May 1. The June 19 memorandum went over the ground of railway developments in the Balkans and stated that if Russia raised no objection to the Sanjak railway Austria should support other railways especially the Danube-Adriatic railway. It then defined the interests of each Power in the Balkans in the eventuality of a break up of the Ottoman Empire. This correspondence occurred before the Turkish revolution in

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 34.]

⁽²⁾ [The Editor of the *Fortnightly* has informed the Editors that authorship of this article cannot be now determined, but he believes it to have been by Dr. E. J. Dillon.]

July. In such an eventuality, so far as I can remember from listening to a first reading, Austria should take Bosnia, Herzegovina and the Sanjak, while Russia was admitted to have special interests in the Straits and the country adjacent to Constantinople. Pending a break up of the Turkish Empire the *status quo* was to be observed. It was, I think, admitted that by previous arrangements dating far back Russia had acknowledged that Austria might claim to annex the two provinces and the Sanjak, but the memorandum of June 19 laid down very clearly and distinctly that the annexation was a question of European concern and could not be settled by any separate agreement between Russia and Austria. I told Monsieur Iswolsky after he had finished reading that I considered that there was no justification for stating that Russia had offered Austria the Sanjak and that the latter had refused: and I acknowledged that Russia had been perfectly straight in laying down very positively that the annexation was not a matter solely between Russia and Austria but of general European concern. Iswolsky said that he could not well publish the whole of the memorandum as it dealt with the eventuality of a break up of the Turkish Empire: and so his hands were tied and he could not refute with documentary evidence the insidious misrepresentations of the Fortnightly article. He then made a rather curious statement. He said "If Aehrenthal pushes me too far I have documents from him in my possession which if published would have the very gravest consequences, and which would show Aehrenthal in his true light. I do not want to publish them as I am anxious that peace should be maintained and that war should not occur—but I must not be driven too far. In August of last year Aehrenthal proposed that we should join (I reported this at the time) a group of "Conservative Powers" to block all reforms in Macedonia and to push England on one side. This project leaked out and was indignantly and officially denied at Vienna. I have the document here, and will show it to you on your next visit, in which Aehrenthal asked us to join with him and I refused to do so. I kept silence when the denial was issued as I did not want to make mischief." I cannot conceive what are the mysterious documents which if published would have the gravest consequences. He said that they did not refer to Turkey. It is most regrettable that this duel between Iswolsky and Aehrenthal still continues, and that the past is not allowed to slumber in oblivion. Iswolsky says that on Berchtold's return he will ask him if he had anything to do with the Fortnightly article, and if he admits that he had then all personal relations must cease between them. On the whole the Press here back up Iswolsky—a pleasing rarity—though Monsieur Miliukoff has an attack on him in the organ of his party. All that Iswolsky related to me he related also to Louis, who is informing his Government. Iswolsky was most anxious that I should explain all to you, which I have done to the best of my memory. I am of opinion that Iswolsky, hampered as he was by the engagements of his predecessors, was firm on the point that the annexation was a European question, could not be settled between Russia and Austria alone, and that so long as possible the *status quo* in the Balkans should be maintained. This is all that in the circumstances we could rightly expect of him.

Y[ou]rs sincerely,

A. NICOLSON.

MINUTE BY KING EDWARD.

A most interesting but not satisfactory letter.

E.R.

No. 873.

Mr. T. Russell to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 41779/41779/09/3.

(No. 183.) Confidential.

Sir,

Vienna, D. November 11, 1909.

R. November 15, 1909.

I have the honour to report that the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, accompanied by his wife the Duchess of Hohenberg, left Vienna last night for Berlin on a visit to the German Emperor and Empress.

As this will be the fifth meeting which has taken place between the Emperor William and the Austro-Hungarian Heir-apparent in the course of the present year, it can be assumed that the desire to seek each other's society is prompted not merely by the political ties which bind their two Empires but also by the existence of very intimate personal relations. Contrary to all precedent the present journey to Berlin was arranged without consultation with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs. The Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Berlin, when expostulating at the Ballplatz a few days ago with Count Aehrenthal at having been left in total ignorance of the proposed visit, was met with the retort that the latter himself was in a similar plight and had received no intimation whatever with regard to the plans of the Archduke.

It is interesting to observe in this connection that the establishment of the Archduke's more intimate relations with the Emperor William appears to synchronize with the diminution of the cordiality which His Imperial Majesty was wont to display towards Count Aehrenthal. For the former occurrence it is difficult to account, as no great sympathy is said to have existed between these Imperial Personages in the past. For the coldness which now prevails between the Archduke and Count Aehrenthal there are various known causes, which it would perhaps be expedient to consider at the present juncture.

When Count Aehrenthal first assumed office the Archduke had looked for his collaboration in a pro-Slav anti-Magyar policy. This hope was doomed to disappointment, for the Minister, when mastering more fully the difficulties of government in the Dual Monarchy, realized that his task was impossible without support from Hungary and that he could not therefore co-operate with His Imperial Highness. Imbued with this view he heard with dismay the news from Sinaia, on the occasion of the recent visit of the Archduke to the Roumanian Court, that His Imperial Highness had not only received a deputation of Roumanians but had even expressed his sympathy for the wrongs they suffered under Hungarian rule. His Excellency, though deeply mortified, endeavoured to explain away the incident in the columns of the semi-official "Fremdenblatt." The Archduke indignantly repudiated this defence on his behalf and gave orders for the immediate cessation of his subscription towards that journal. In addition to this difference of opinion on Hungarian affairs the Archduke, who is a clerical of clericals, can only view with disapproval the frigid attitude which Count Aehrenthal has maintained towards the Vatican and the Nuncio in Vienna ever since the Wahrmond affair of last year.

And now a further grievance has arisen. On the occasion of the elevation of Princess Hohenberg to the rank of a Duchess an official statement on the subject, emanating from the Ministry over which Count Aehrenthal presides, was published in the Press. In this statement the word "technical" was employed in referring to the obstacles which had existed in the past to granting to Princess Hohenberg a suitable title and position. The Archduke on perusing the paragraph is reported to have burst into a transport of rage over the choice of this word "technical," which he declared was more applicable to the description of an automobile than to an official notification concerning the rank of his wife.

In view of the above, and possibly other differences of opinion which may exist between the Archduke and Count Aehrenthal, and in view of the closer friendship which has sprung up between His Imperial Highness and the Emperor William, it would be well now, I venture to think, to look in the first instance towards the

Prussian Court in seeking for any influences which may sway the future attitude of the Austro-Hungarian Heir-apparent.

I have, &c.

THEO. RUSSELL.

No. 874.

Mr. Bax-Ironside to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 42148/42148/09/18.

(No. 50.) Confidential.

Sir,

Berne, D. November 15, 1909.

R. November 17, 1909.

I have read with interest Sir F. Cartwright's despatch No. 152, addressed to you on September 22, containing an account of an interview which one of the reporters of the "Neue Freie Presse" had with Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg, the new German Chancellor, during his recent visit to the Austrian capital. The fact that both Austria-Hungary and Italy are entering the ranks of "Dreadnought"-building Powers is doubtless the subject of much discussion in the leading capitals of the world. One of my colleagues here, who has been at two previous posts with me, and who is an old friend of mine, informs me that he discussed with Monsieur de Bülow the other day the situation which has thus been newly created. The German Minister frankly faced the fact that in the case of all the three nations interested serious financial difficulties would be met with, but he gave it as his opinion that both Germany and Austria-Hungary, at any rate, would make all necessary sacrifices: the former to obtain one of the leading, if not the leading Navy of the world, the latter, to satisfy and content her close ally. It was, he thought, still too early to give an opinion on the shipbuilding capacity of Italy.

In the course of a conversation with me, Herr von Bülow lamented the increase of Imperial German taxation, and when I remarked that even this increase did not appear to be sufficient to meet the requirements of the situation, he replied, "Unfortunately, the Emperor is determined to have one of the largest Navies of the world, and the expenses of such a Navy, combined with those of the German Army, demand a rich Exchequer." Further taxation would, in his opinion, lead to a large increase in the Social-Democratic vote. This conversation was before the results of the last German Elections were known. I hear from one of the Austrian Secretaries, who comes from the Bukovina, that considerable dissatisfaction is already being expressed in the interior of the Austrian Empire at any idea of a further increase of taxation for Naval Expenses: neither is it probable that any financial scheme with such an object will meet with favour in Hungary.

Should the German Emperor, therefore, persist in his present course, not only will he be faced with a large deficit in his own country, but he will have to use all his powerful influence with the Emperor of Austria to oblige the latter to satisfy the shipbuilding requirements which the German Emperor has demanded from his Allies. That such influence is already being brought to bear is apparent from the many meetings which have taken place this year between the Emperor and the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, and the special efforts made by the former to solve, in a sense favourable to the Archduke, the problems of etiquette raised by the position of the Duchess of Hohenberg.

It appears likely that the peaceful proclivities of Herr von Bethmann-Hollweg will be largely dwelt upon in the European Press, but little real reliance can be placed in the genuineness of the same, until some proof of their existence has been shown to the world.

I have, &c.

[H. BAX-IRONSIDE.]

No. 875.

Sir A. Nicolson to Sir Edward Grey.

F.O. 157/157/10/38.

(No. 681.)

Sir,

St. Petersburg, D. December 28, 1909.

R. January 3, 1910.

I have the honour to report that articles on the subject of the new Hungarian loan are published to-day in the "Novoe Vremya" and the "Bourse Gazette."

The "Novoe Vremya" begins by censuring the French Government for their action and attitude with reference to the Bulgarian loan: the French Government has seen fit to permit a *rapprochement* between Bulgaria and Austria on the firm basis of mutual financial benefit. Now a similar case has arisen. Hungary is in need of money to meet the expenditure on military preparations during the late Bosnian crisis, and to provide for the construction of new battleships. She applied to France and met with a very different reception to that accorded to Bulgaria. The realisation of the loan is now only a question of settling certain formalities. The action of the French Government will be resented in Bulgaria and produce undesirable results. The Triple Alliance has been strengthened by the accession of a new and extremely useful member—the Paris Bourse. Paris bankers bow the knee to one god only and his name is not spelt with a capital letter; but from French statesmen something different might have been expected. To drive Bulgaria away from Russia, England and France and to save Austria-Hungary from serious financial difficulties means, amongst other things, working against the vital interests of France herself.

The "Bourse Gazette" observes that the rapidity with which Hungary has arranged this loan with France is causing astonishment even in leading circles at Vienna. Possibly Austria herself will before long also apply to France. The action of Russia's ally France is to be attributed to a firm conviction that the money thus obtained will not be spent on naval or military needs or on the improvement of forces which might be used against Russia. It is greatly to be hoped that this conviction is well founded and will prove true.

I have, &c.

A. NICOLSON.

No. 876.

*Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.*Private.⁽¹⁾

Dear Sir Edward Grey,

Vienna British Embassy, September 28, 1910.

. . . .⁽²⁾ I am convinced that Count Aehrenthal is determined to do all that lies in his power to maintain peace in the Balkans, first of all because it is the Emperor's wish that this country should be kept out of foreign complications, and because to go against the Emperor's wishes in this matter would be to endanger his—Aehrenthal's—own position, and secondly because Aehrenthal sees that a war, entered into by Austria, would inevitably weaken and exhaust her and make her, at the end of it, more than ever dependent upon German support. It may be due to vanity on the part of Aehrenthal, or it may be due to patriotic feeling, but it is quite certain to me that he is determined to play an independent and personal rôle in European politics, and that nothing would be more distasteful to him than to feel himself at the mercy and dictation of Berlin. Moreover, I suspect Count Aehrenthal has no intention of allowing Austria-Hungary to be pushed by Germany further towards the South East of Europe and made to absorb still more Slav

⁽¹⁾ [Grey MSS., Vol. 2.]⁽²⁾ [The opening sentences of this letter refer to Baron von Aehrenthal's recent illness.]

populations into her Empire. To do this would make her relations with Russia still more strained than they are at present, and Aehrenthal wishes to avoid this and would, I think, be satisfied if Austria-Hungary enjoyed a reasonable amount of influence in the Balkans instead of having to go there herself. It seems to me to be also quite possible that Aehrenthal holds to the idea that Austria-Hungary should not entirely turn her back upon Germany but that circumstances may arise when the former might still play a great rôle in Central Europe and exert a moral influence over South German public opinion if that opinion some day were to turn against the policy which Prussia might wish to pursue. Aehrenthal will remain faithful to the alliance with Germany so long as that alliance continues to exist for the common defence of Central Europe against possible attacks from the East and West, but I think he will use his influence to prevent the real purpose of the alliance from being misinterpreted to mean that Austria-Hungary is bound to follow Germany into any adventure to which the latter may feel inclined to drag her.

To return however to Austro-Hungarian Balkan policy. I think it is quite clear that Aehrenthal dreads anything occurring which is likely to lead to a change in the "status quo" in the Near East. Aehrenthal does not love the new Turkish régime for itself—in a moment of expansion he once exclaimed to me "do you suppose I can sympathise with revolutionary committees and tribunals?"—but he will do nothing to damage the prestige of the present Turkish Government and he hopes that for the peace of the Balkans the new régime at Constantinople will hold its own for some time to come. Should it go overboard, he is convinced that anarchy will follow, and this would endanger the peace of Europe; for him the new Turkish régime, bad as it may be, is the lid on the pot which keeps the stuff inside from boiling over, and he will do his utmost diplomatically to keep the lid from being blown away. He told me at Marienbad that he had advised Hakki Pasha to show as much moderation as possible in dealing with the difficult state of things in Macedonia, but this advice, I expect, he will only give quite privately to leading Turks and that he will rather hesitate to repeat it officially to the Porte in his capacity as Austro-Hungarian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

As regards the talk which was current this summer that Turkey was about to join the Triple Alliance, I think it is pretty clear that there is but little foundation for such rumours. Aehrenthal is no doubt pleased that Austro-Hungarian relations with Turkey should be on the best possible footing, but an alliance with Turkey would only bring with it worries and scarcely any corresponding advantages. It is also quite natural that the new Turkish régime should show sympathy for Austria-Hungary, a Power which, now that the Bosnian annexation crisis is over, covets no further Turkish territory, and always acts diplomatically in as considerate a manner as possible towards it. . . .⁽³⁾

Yours sincerely,

FAIRFAX L. CARTWRIGHT.

⁽³⁾ [The rest of this long letter discusses further the situation in the Balkans in general terms. It is not reproduced as it does not add anything to our information on this subject.]

[ED. NOTE.—A. F. Pribram : *Secret Treaties* (Harvard University Press, 1921), II, pp. 240–1, gives the text of an agreement between Austria-Hungary and Italy explaining and supplementing Article VII of the Triple Alliance of 1887. This is dated Vienna, November 30, Rome, December 15, 1909. The agreement states that Austria-Hungary should not re-occupy the Sanjak of Novibazar, unless Italy had made a previous agreement with her on the subject, "based on the principle of compensation." Copies of the Agreement were exchanged December 19, 1909.]

APPENDIX I.

BULGARIA AND TURKEY.—THE GUÉŠOV AND ORIENTAL RAILWAY INCIDENTS, 1908.

[Extract from Mr. (Sir) John A. C. Tilley's Memorandum "The Turkish Revolution and its Consequences," March 1, 1909, pp. 4-9.]

AUSTRIA-
HUNGARY AND
BULGARIA.

Outside Turkey there were two countries to which the Young Turk movement was obviously and naturally disturbing, namely, Austria, as administrator of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Bulgaria. Within a month of the granting of the Constitution, it began to be rumoured that Austria would annex Bosnia and Herzegovina as the only means of evading future difficulties, and it was clear, given the well-known feeling of the Turks with regard to Bulgaria and Bulgarians, and the fact that fear of losing Macedonia was one cause of the revolution, that if the Young Turks were successful they would look to crushing Bulgaria. So much was this the case, that in Bulgaria Prince Ferdinand's personal unpopularity was greatly increased, and his position endangered, by the feeling that he had missed the opportunity afforded by Turkey's weakness of effecting the union of Macedonia with Bulgaria, and it was clear that some decisive step must be taken at once to ensure Bulgaria's future position as far as possible.

The occasion for taking this step was presently created by Turkey itself.

GUESHOFF
INCIDENT.

On the 12th September M. Gueshoff, the Bulgarian Agent at Constantinople, not having received an invitation to a dinner to be given by the Minister for Foreign Affairs to the foreign Representatives, was ordered by his Government to leave Sophia if an invitation was not forthcoming. The German Ambassador told M. Gueshoff that the matter being a political one he could only give quite unofficial advice to the Porte, and the advice he did give it was not to yield.

The invitation was not sent, and M. Gueshoff left.

On the 14th September Sir G. Buchanan reported that, in view of this incident, the Bulgarian Government, who were already being reproached for inaction in regard to the future of the Bulgarian population of Macedonia, would, unless satisfied on that head, declare the independence of Bulgaria, and on the 18th he added that if the Bulgarian Government did not obtain satisfaction in regard to the Gueshoff incident, they would recall their Agency, waiting for this purpose till the 23rd September, when they would have 100,000 men under arms. Prince Ferdinand's Private Secretary at the same time assured Sir G. Buchanan that Bulgaria would do nothing rash.

On the 20th September Sir G. Lowther reported that the Grand Vizier had sent a conciliatory message to Sophia, and that he was prepared to submit the question at issue to the Powers Signatory of the Treaty of Berlin.

On the 21st Sir E. Grey suggested to the Russian Government joint counsels of prudence at Sophia, and to the Turkish Government the desirability of a compromise.

To Mr. O'Beirne,
No. 240,
July 31, 1908.
Mr. Carnegie,
No. 103,
August 5, 1908.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 71, August 5;
No. 72, August 19,
1908.
Sir E. Goschen,
No. 116,
August 31, 1908.

To Sir G. Lowther,
No. 406,
September 19, 1908.
[pp. 261-2, No. 202.]

Sir G. Lowther,
No. 258,
Telegraphic,
September 12, 1908.

Sir G. Lowther,
No. 259,
September 13, 1908.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 17,
Telegraphic.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 18,
Telegraphic.

Sir G. Lowther,
No. 265,
Telegraphic.

To Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 333,
Telegraphic.

To Sir G. Lowther
No. 237,
Telegraphic.

On the 22nd instant Sir G. Buchanan reported that the Bulgarian Government refused to withdraw the staff which they had charged with the working of the Oriental Railway during the strike which had just ended, on the alleged ground that the working of a railway on Bulgarian territory could not be entrusted to men who had declared a strike from Constantinople while consenting to run military trains in Turkey.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 19,
Telegraphic.

The Oriental Railway line through Bulgaria is, it should be explained, the property of the Turkish Government, by whom it has been leased to an Austrian Company, the shares in which are mostly held in Vienna and Berlin.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 79,
September 30.

On the 22nd the Russian Government replied to our suggestion of a warning at Sophia by proposing a warning both at Constantinople and Sophia. Sir E. Grey replied on the 26th, after consulting Sir G. Lowther, that he deprecated a warning at Constantinople.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 173,
Telegraphic.
To Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 390,
Telegraphic.

Meanwhile, on the 23rd, Sir G. Lowther had reported that the communication sent by the Grand Vizier to Sophia was not conciliatory. On the 24th September Sir G. Buchanan telegraphed that this communication had made a bad impression, that the press was in favour of a declaration of independence, and that the honours accorded to Prince Ferdinand by the Emperor of Austria, whose guest he was at Buda-Pesth, were regarded as moral support of Bulgaria.

Sir G. Lowther,
No. 268,
Telegraphic.
Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 20,
Telegraphic.

On the 26th the Secretary of the Bulgarian Agency was told at the Foreign Office that the occupation of the Oriental Railway by the Bulgarian Government was unjustifiable.

To Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 19,
Telegraphic.

On the same day Sir A. Nicolson reported that the Russian Representative at Sophia had been instructed to propose a conciliatory message about the Gueshoff incident to the Sublime Porte, and Sir G. Lowther telegraphed that the Grand Vizier had expressed to the Bulgarian his regret at the incident.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 176,
Telegraphic.

Sir G. Lowther,
No. 274,
Telegraphic.

On the 27th we heard that the Austrian and German Representatives at Sophia had received instructions to protest against the occupation of the railway. Sir G. Buchanan said that the railway question, even more than the Gueshoff incident, had strengthened the movement in favour of independence, the reason being that the Oriental Railway Company worked the line in Turkish rather than Bulgarian interests, and that Bulgarian commerce thereby suffered.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 25,
Telegraphic.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 81,
October 2.

On the 28th Sir C. Hardinge warned the Turkish Ambassador against forcing any issues with Bulgaria just now, when she was at the zenith of her strength.

To Sir G. Lowther,
No. 253,
Telegraphic.

On the 29th Sir A. Nicolson gave it as his opinion that Russia would not dislike a declaration of Bulgarian independence, would welcome modifications of the Treaty of Berlin, and that she was not really pleased at the change of régime in Turkey, a view which has lately been strongly confirmed by Sir G. Lowther.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 180,
Telegraphic.
[p. 368, No. 271.]

Sir G. Lowther,
No. 90,
February 10, 1909,
and private letters.

On the same day Sir G. Buchanan reported that the Council of Ministers had decided that it was impossible, on account of economic and strategical interests, to restore the line to Turkey; that he had warned the Government that their proceedings were indefensible, and would forfeit them the sympathy of Great Britain; they were also unyielding about the Gueshoff incident, but said that the *declaration of independence was not contemplated at present.*

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 27,
Telegraphic.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 28,
Telegraphic.
[p. 369, No. 272.]

On the 30th September Sir A. Nicolson stated that the protests made at Sophia by the Austrian and German Representatives

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 181,
Telegraphic.

against the occupation of the line were very mild. The Russian Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs had, moreover, pointed out that it was open to question whether the Article of the Treaty of Berlin which dealt with the railways in Eastern Roumelia should not be considered to have lapsed like the other Articles dealing with that province.

It was, of course, clear that what was disagreeable to Russia was not the action of Bulgaria, but the fact that it was taken apparently under the shelter of Austria, whose supremacy in the Balkan States where Russian influence in Bulgaria and Austrian influence in Servia had for thirty years been supposed to balance.

On the 1st October Sir E. Grey proposed to the Turkish and Bulgarian Governments that the latter should restore the railway on the understanding that the lease would afterwards be transferred to them. The Turkish Government assented, but meanwhile things had gone further.

To Sir G. Lowther,
No. 258,
Telegraphic.

To Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 31,
Telegraphic.
Sir G. Lowther,
No. 281,
Telegraphic,
September 29.

On the same evening—the 1st October—we heard from Sir G. Buchanan that the Council of Ministers had already discussed the future title of the Prince and decided in favour of 'Czar of the Bulgarians, and that they had arranged to summon a special meeting of the Sobranje, which would make a declaration of independence, and to call up 40,000 reservists.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 29,
Telegraphic.
[p. 371, No. 275.]

On the 2nd October Sir E. Grey instructed Sir G. Lowther to advise the Porte to appeal to the Powers, should Bulgaria prove irreconcilable, for an equitable settlement of the two questions at issue, and in any case to avoid anything which might lead to hostilities.

To Sir G. Lowther
No. 282.

Sir G. Buchanan was told that His Majesty's Government took note with pleasure of the assurance of the Bulgarian Government that a proclamation of independence was not contemplated and that they would strongly deprecate any such step. He replied that the Russian Agent had also strongly discouraged a proclamation of independence. In view of the news received from Sophia the previous day, His Majesty's Government, on the 2nd October, asked all the Powers to warn the Bulgarian Government of the gravity of their proposed action and the impossibility of foreseeing the consequences, and on the following day—the 3rd October—they urged the Powers to support their proposal for a compromise in regard to the railway question.

To Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 35,
Telegraphic,
October 2.
[p. 374, No. 280.]
Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 30,
[p. 373, No. 277.]

To Paris, Berlin,
St. Petersburg,
Vienna and Rome.
[p. 373, No. 278.]

ANNEXATION OF
BOSNIA AND
HERZEGOVINA
TO AUSTRIA-
HUNGARY.

On the 3rd October the French Foreign Office informed Sir F. Bertie that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador had announced the intention of his Government to *annex Bosnia and Herzegovina*, whilst renouncing their rights with regard to the Sanjak of Novi-Bazar. A similar statement was made by Count Mensdorff to Sir C. Hardinge when communicating a private letter from Baron d'Aehrenthal. His Excellency was also the bearer of a private letter from the Emperor of Austria to the King announcing the annexation. Later in the day the French Minister for Foreign Affairs told Sir F. Bertie that, according to the Austrian Ambassador, the action of his Government had the concurrence of the Cabinets of St. Petersburg, Berlin and Rome. On the same day the German Under-Secretary of State, on being asked whether there was any truth in the report that Austria contemplated the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, said that such an event would be most untoward and

Sir F. Bertie,
No. 48,
Telegraphic,
October 3.
[pp. 374-5, No. 281.]

Sir F. Bertie,
No. 49,
Telegraphic.
[pp. 376-7, No. 285.]

Sir F. Lascelles,
No. 50,
Telegraphic,
October 3.

would place the German Government in a position of the greatest possible embarrassment. On the next day the Austrian Minister for Foreign Affairs told Sir E. Goschen that he disbelieved the rumours of an imminent declaration of independence by Bulgaria. His Excellency was too much pressed for time to admit of a long interview, but he expressed an earnest desire for the success of the constitutional movement in Turkey.

INDEPENDENCE
OF BULGARIA.

The *Proclamation of Independence* was issued by the Prince at Tirnova [sic Tirnovo] on the following day, the 5th October.

Sir E. Goschen,
No. 40,
Telegraphic.
[pp. 379-80, No. 289.]
No. 41,
Telegraphic.

How far Austria and Bulgaria were acting in concert is still not known, nor are His Majesty's Government fully informed as to the communications which had passed between Baron d'Aehrenthal and the Russian, Italian, and German Ministers for Foreign Affairs. It is probable, however, in view of Bulgaria's abhorrence of foreign influence and Prince Ferdinand's dislike of Austria, that there was no understanding between those two countries, but that each, guessing what action the other was likely to take, considered that such action would help to cover her own proceedings. As to Baron d'Aehrenthal's negotiations, it may be supposed that he made Germany and Russia aware of what he intended, and assured himself that, although they might not be pleased, they would not actively oppose his action. Russia's hands were indeed more or less tied not only by the Secret Agreements of 1881, 1884, and 1897, in which she had admitted the possibility of an Austrian annexation, but by what M. Isvolsky had said at Buchlau earlier in the autumn.

Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 36 [38],
Telegraphic,
October 5.
[p. 387, No. 295.]
Sir G. Buchanan,
No. 39.

(E.g., Sir G.
Buchanan, No. 7,
January 18, 1909.)

AUSTRO-RUSSIAN
SECRET AGREEMENTS.

Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 542,
November 27.
[p. 513, No. 467.]
Sir F. Cartwright,
No. 39,
March 18 [15], 1909
[pp. 682-5, No. 689.]
Sir A. Nicolson,
No. 4,
January 2, 1909.
[pp. 547-8, No. 498.]
Sir E. Goschen,
No. 72,
Telegraphic,
November 5.
[p. 483, No. 438.]

APPENDIX II.

THE MONTENEGRIN NEGOTIATIONS, APRIL-MAY 1909.

[Extract from Mr. Alwyn Parker's Memorandum on the Near Eastern Crisis,
29 July, 1909, pp. 72-7.(¹)]

3. The Montenegrin Negotiations.

The attitude of Montenegro towards the annexation of the two provinces has already been alluded to: it is unnecessary to retrace here the varied emotions of the little Principality throughout the six months of the crisis, or to recount the bold words in which, from time to time, Prince Nicholas reassured his people as to the outcome of events; whatever sympathy may have been felt for Montenegro, it soon became clear that the measure of compensation would not be fixed by the extent of her baffled aspirations, but in the main by the limits of what Austria-Hungary was prepared to concede.

When Sir Charles Hardinge was in Berlin in February the Imperial Chancellor observed to him that it was difficult to take the claims of Prince Nicholas seriously, since it was only a few weeks before that His Royal Highness had received a

(¹) [A lengthy memorandum by Sir Fairfax Cartwright in No. 81, D. 12 May, R. 17 May, 1909, dealt with the evolution of Austro-Hungarian policy in regard to Bosnia up to the occupation, but it has not been thought necessary to reproduce this.]

considerable instalment of the annual pension paid to him by the Austro-Hungarian Government,—a circumstance which tended to show that resentment against the Dual Monarchy could not be very deep-rooted.

In indicating their readiness to assent to the abrogation of Article 25 of the Treaty of Berlin His Majesty's Government, as has been shown, stipulated that Austria-Hungary should first concur in the modification of Article 29 to the satisfaction of the Italian Government, who had emphasized their concern on this subject from the beginning of the crisis, and whom His Majesty's Government had undertaken to support.

To Sir R. Rodd
(Rome), No. 53,
April 2, 1909.

To Sir R. Rodd
(Rome), No. 176,
March 31, 1909.
[p. 766, No. 812.]

In these circumstances Sir E. Grey lost no time in drawing the attention of the Italian Government to the reservation insisted upon, and he inquired what the existing position of the question was, what exactly were the conditions being insisted upon, and whether it had been ascertained that they were satisfactory to Montenegro.

On the 1st April the Italian Chargé d'Affairs stated that the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador in Rome had been authorized to confirm in writing the willingness of Austria-Hungary to agree to certain modifications in Article 29, provided the proposed changes met with the concurrence of all the Signatory Powers, and the Montenegrin Government agreed to make the following Declaration:—

"Le Gouvernement Princier est prêt à se conformer à telle décision qui sera prise par les Grandes Puissances en ce qui concerne l'Article 25 du Traité de Berlin; il entretiendra désormais des rapports d'amitié et de bon voisinage avec le Gouvernement Impérial et Royal d'Autriche-Hongrie."

The agreement arrived at between the Austro-Hungarian and Italian Governments would be communicated to the Signatory Powers, and their adhesion invited, by the Cabinet of Vienna.

To appreciate clearly the nature of the amendments proposed, the Article in its original and modified form is printed in juxtaposition:—

ARTICLE 29.

(Original Text.)

1. Antivari et son littoral sont annexés au Monténégro sous les conditions suivantes:—

2. Les contrées situées au sud de ce territoire, d'après la délimitation ci-dessus déterminée, jusqu'à la Bojana, y compris Dulcinjo, seront restituées à la Turquie.

3. La commune de Spitcha jusqu'à la limite septentrionale du territoire indiqué dans la description détaillée des frontières sera incorporée à la Dalmatie.

4. Il y aura pleine et entière liberté de navigation sur la Bojana pour le Monténégro. Il ne sera pas construit de fortifications sur le parcours de ce fleuve à l'exception de celles qui seraient nécessaires à la défense locale de la place de Scutari, lesquelles ne s'étendront pas au delà d'une distance de 6 kilom. de cette ville.

5. Le Monténégro ne pourra avoir ni bâtiments ni pavillon de guerre.

6. Le port d'Antivari et toutes les eaux du Monténégro resteront fermées aux bâtiments de guerre de toutes les nations.

7. Les fortifications situées entre le lac et le littoral sur le territoire monténégrin seront rasées, et il ne pourra en être élevé de nouvelles dans cette zone.

ARTICLE 29.

(Proposed Modified Text.)

1. Antivari et son littoral sont annexés au Monténégro sous les conditions suivantes:—

2. Les contrées situées au sud de ce territoire, d'après la délimitation ci-dessus déterminée, jusqu'à la Bojana, y compris Dulcinjo, seront restituées à la Turquie.

3. La commune de Spitcha jusqu'à la limite septentrionale du territoire indiqué dans la description détaillée des frontières sera incorporée à la Dalmatie.

4. [Il y aura pleine et entière liberté de navigation sur la Bojana pour le Monténégro. Il ne sera pas construit de fortifications sur le parcours de ce fleuve à l'exception de celles qui seraient nécessaires à la défense locale de la place de Scutari, lesquelles ne s'étendront pas au delà d'une distance de 6 kilom. de cette ville.]

5. Cancelled.

6. [Le port d'Antivari doit conserver le caractère de port commercial; il ne pourra pas y être érigé d'œuvres qui le transforment en port militaire.]

7. Cancelled.

8. La police maritime et sanitaire, tant à Antivari que le long de la côte du Monténégro, sera exercée par l'Autriche-Hongrie au moyen de bâtiments légers garde-côtes.

9. Le Monténégro adoptera la législation maritime en vigueur en Dalmatie. De son côté, l'Autriche-Hongrie s'engage à accorder sa protection consulaire au pavillon marchand monténégrin.

10. Le Monténégro devra s'entendre avec l'Autriche-Hongrie sur le droit de construire et d'entretenir à travers le nouveau territoire monténégrin une route et un chemin de fer.

11. Une entière liberté de communications sera assurée sur ces voies.

8. Cancelled.

9. Cancelled.

10. Cancelled.

11. Cancelled.

In accordance with the request of the Italian Government, His Majesty's Representative at Cetinje was instructed to support strongly his Italian colleague in obtaining the acceptance of the desired declaration by the Montenegrin Government.

Prince Nicholas was somewhat disappointed that Austria-Hungary had not been induced to agree to the cession of Spizza: but on the 5th April the Government wrote a note couched in conciliatory language to the Italian Minister, embodying the substance of the desired Declaration, and volunteering the statement that Antivari should remain a commercial port, "ce qui mettra son libre développement à l'abri des inconvénients auxquels sont souvent exposés les ports militaires."

To Mr. O'Reilly
(Cetinje),
No. 17,
Telegraphic,
April 12, 1909

Mr. O'Reilly
(Cetinje),
No. 18,
Telegraphic,
April 1, 1909

Mr. O'Reilly
(Cetinje),
No. 3,
April 12, 1909.

A copy of this note was officially communicated to the Austro-Hungarian Minister at Cetinje, the Government at the same time expressing the hope that nothing now stood in the way of good relations.

Mr. O'Reilly
(Cetinje),
No. 17,
Telegraphic,
April 6, 1909.

While these negotiations were proceeding, the Italian Chargé d'Affaires in London made a further communication, of a somewhat disturbing nature, to the effect that Baron von Aehrenthal was not satisfied with the form of Declaration proposed by the Italian Government for Montenegro, but that his Excellency required it to be assimilated to the Servian note of the 31st March.

Italian Chargé
d'Affaires,
April 7, 1909.

Sir R. Rodd
(Rome), No. 59,
April 6, 1909.

Sir E. Grey sent a written reply to the Italian Chargé d'Affaires in the following terms:—

"Sir Edward Grey has had under his consideration the communication made by the Italian Chargé d'Affaires to Sir C. Hardinge this afternoon with respect to the new condition required by the Austro-Hungarian Government in the Declaration to be made by Montenegro.

To Count de
Bosdari,
April 7, 1909.

"Sir Edward Grey had understood that the original text proposed by the Italian Government had been accepted by the Austrian Government, in which case the Austrian Government would not seem justified in now putting forward new conditions after acceptance by Montenegro of the original terms.

"His Majesty's Government spontaneously agreed to support the Italian Representative at Cetinje, on the understanding that the Declaration as proposed would be regarded as satisfactory by Austria.

"In these circumstances, although His Majesty's Government will do nothing to discourage the Montenegrin Government from accepting the amended text, they cannot instruct their Representative at Cetinje to interfere further."

Two days later, however, a communication was made to Sir E. Grey by the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, on the part of Baron von Aehrenthal, to the effect that the Montenegrin controversy had been satisfactorily concluded, on the basis of the original Italian proposals, by the note already received, to which a favourable reply had been given at Cetinje by the Austro-Hungarian Government.

To Sir R. Rodd
(Rome), No. 191,
Telegraphic,
April 8, 1909.

Attention at Rome was occupied with attempting to fathom why this new condition was put forward by Austria-Hungary and subsequently abandoned: opinions differed on the subject, which, however, has an interest which is merely academic.

Sir R. Rodd
(Rome),
No. 93(A),
April 9, 1909.

To Sir A. Nicolson (St. Petersburg), No. 450, Telegraphic, April 2, 1909.
 Sir A. Nicolson (St. Petersburg), No. 182, Telegraphic, April 2, 1909.

When the Russian Government heard of the steps which the Italian Government proposed to take at Cetinje, they addressed a Circular to the Powers on the Montenegrin question: they expressed alarm at the proposed prohibition in regard to Antivari; they did not consider it necessary to ask for a declaration from Montenegro, and they doubted whether such would be forthcoming; and they took exception to an arrangement being made between Austria-Hungary and Italy and afterwards submitted to the Powers.

Sir E. Grey explained that he had only heard of the Italian Government's proposals the same day as M. Isvolsky, and they had seemed so reasonable that he had at once promised to support them. If, however, the Prince of Montenegro considered any of the proposed modifications to his disadvantage, His Majesty's Government would join in suggesting that they should not be made, but, for reasons which were explained, they considered it worse than useless to press for alterations of the Article in excess of what had already been proposed.

To Sir A. Nicolson (St. Petersburg), No. 459, Telegraphic, April 5, 1909.

Sir A. Nicolson (St. Petersburg), No. 221, April 6 [pp. 774-5, No. 828]; No. 218, April 5, 1909.

When M. Isvolsky learnt of the attitude of His Majesty's Government he exclaimed: "C'est un coup mortel à ma position; je n'ai qu'à donner ma démission." His Excellency had a somewhat heated interview with His Majesty's Ambassador, the gist of the complaint being that Russia, who had been in intimate relations with Montenegro since the days of Peter the Great, trained her army, and subsidized the Prince, had not been consulted before any definite steps were taken at Cetinje.

His Majesty's Ambassador informed M. Isvolsky two days later, under instructions, that had it not been for the action of His Majesty's Government, working in co-operation with that of Italy, the modification of Article 29 as a condition of the abrogation of Article 25 would not have been made, and if such a conditional promise to assent to the abrogation of Article 25 had not been given by His Majesty's Government, Servia would by now probably be in the occupation of the Austrian armies. The best proof that His Majesty's Government action had not been detrimental to the interest of Montenegro was to be found in the reply of the Montenegrin Government to the recent representations. His Excellency was further authorized to assure M. Isvolsky that His Majesty's Government had no intention of deviating a hair's breadth from their policy of supporting Russia in the Near East. Sir A. Nicolson reported that M. Isvolsky was pleased and entirely satisfied with these arguments and assurances, and his Excellency left him in a thoroughly contented frame of mind.

Sir A. Nicolson (St. Petersburg), No. 231, April 8, 1909.

On the 21st April the Austro-Hungarian Government communicated the proposed modifications in Article 29, and enquired whether His Majesty's Government were disposed to agree to them.

Russian Ambassador, April 23, 1909.

After consultation with the Russian Government, His Majesty's Government addressed the following reply to the Austro-Hungarian Government on the 27th April:—

To Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, April 27, 1909. [p. 794, No. 855.]

"His Majesty's Government have noted with satisfaction that the Austro-Hungarian Government assent to the suppression of paragraphs 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11, of the Article in question. As to the proposal to replace paragraph 6 by another, stipulating that the port of Antivari shall preserve the character of a commercial port, and that no works shall be erected there to transform it into a military port, His Majesty's Government have no objection in principle to such an arrangement. In this connection the Declaration made by the Montenegrin Government to the Austro-Hungarian Representative at Cetinje would appear adequate; if, however, the Austro-Hungarian Government wish to invest this clause with the character of a formal international stipulation, it would evidently be necessary that it should take the form of a Treaty modifying the Treaty of Berlin, and signed by the Plenipotentiaries of the Powers signatory of the Treaty of Berlin; this course would correspond to that adopted in 1871 in regard to abrogation of Articles 11, 13, and 14 of the Treaty of Paris and the substitution for them of a fresh Article.

"His Majesty's Government understand, however, that the question of paragraph 4, which has been raised by the Turkish Government, still remains open for consideration."

Austro-Hungarian Ambassador, May 24, 1909.

On the 24th May the Austro-Hungarian Ambassador made a communication in which he stated that all the Signatory Powers (including Turkey) had agreed to the

suppression of paragraphs 5 to 11 of Article 29; while the Austro-Hungarian Government, in view of the assurance contained in the Montenegrin Government's note of the 5th April, no longer insisted on another paragraph being substituted for paragraph 6 of the Article. Russian
Ambassador,
April 12, 1909.

The Turkish Government, while assenting to the suppression of alinéas 5 to 11 of the Article, expressed a wish that alinéa 4 should likewise be abolished. The correspondence on this subject, in which His Majesty's Government had only a secondary interest, does not come within the period covered by this memorandum.

APPENDIX III.

Memorandum by Sir Charles Hardinge on the Possibility of War.

[April ? 1909.](¹)

Question :—

In the event of a reactionary Government assuming office in Russia and of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] being asked whether they would be ready to give material aid to Russia in the event of war with Germany and Austria what should the answer be?

This question is one of some importance as it presents an eventuality which is not unlikely to occur. The position of M. Stolypine, the liberal Prime Minister in Russia, is at present doubtful. He has just recovered from a long and severe illness and is expected to return about now to St. Petersburg to resume his duties. During his absence the reactionary party in St. Petersburg, who unfortunately have many adherents at Court, have been very active in their endeavours to undermine his position, and the question of the reorganisation of the General Staff of the Russian Navy presents an opportunity for a conflict between the Emperor and the Duma which, unless some compromise be found, may in the end result in the resignation of M. Stolypine and the formation of a reactionary Gov[ernment] under the leadership of M. Dournovo or some other member of the extreme Right. Were this to happen it is probable that M. Isvolsky would be succeeded at the Ministry for F[oreign] A[ffairs] by M. Goremykin, with M. Hartwig as Assistant Minister, and that a foreign policy more in accordance than now with German aims in Europe would be gradually substituted for the policy recently pursued by Russia of cooperation with England and France. It is probable that the new Foreign Minister would remind the Emperor of the rebuff which H[is] M[ajesty] had received when the Russian Gov[ernment] were compelled under German threats to promise to agree unconditionally to recognise the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It would be pointed out that Russia's ally, weakened by internal troubles, and disinclined to go to war for the sake of Slav aspirations in the Near East, could not be counted upon to render sufficient material assistance as to justify Russia in hoping that she would in the end emerge victoriously from a struggle with the Central Powers of Europe. As for England, it would be pointed out that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] had repeatedly made it clear that her cooperation would be strictly confined to diplomatic support of Russia in the questions at issue in the Balkans. The attitude of France and England during the recent crisis would be cited as an agreement for the reconsideration of the foreign policy of Russia with a view to preventing a repetition of such a humiliation as that recently experienced and to improving the relations of Russia towards the Central European Powers. It does not require much imagination to conceive the possibility of such views being strongly pressed upon the Emperor by a reactionary Foreign Minister, nor to imagine the Emperor, in his anxiety to show no disloyalty towards his alliance with France and his newly acquired friendship with England, driven to ask as a last resource, before yielding to a policy to which his personal feeling is opposed, whether England would be ready to give material aid to Russia in the event of war with Germany and Austria.

(¹) [Grey MSS., Vol. 54.]

In order to determine the reply which should under such circ[unstan]ces be given it is necessary to cast a cursory glance at the international situation of Europe which the events of the past six months have served to bring out clearly and to reduce to their proper perspective.

It is unnecessary here to enter upon a discussion of German aims and intentions but it is assumed in this mem[orandu]m as has been quite frankly asserted by official and unofficial Germans, that the ambitious programme of the German Navy is being carried out with a view to contesting the supremacy of the British Navy at sea. Germany may accordingly be regarded as our only potential enemy in Europe, and that if we are so far charitable as to anticipate that her fleet is not intended for aggressive attack at a suitable moment when it is strong enough and our fleet perhaps at a temporary disadvantage, there can be no doubt whatever that the intention of Germany is to use her fleet in combination with her immense military forces to obtain a position of predominance in Europe by exerting pressure upon England who, it is fully realised, is the one Power capable of offering now, as in the past, effectual resistance to the realisation of any such ambitious scheme.

The active support given by Germany to Austria during the recent crisis in the Balkans has given a claim to Germany to expect similar support from her ally in her pretensions, and the decision of the Austrian Gov[ernmen]t to commence the construction of Dreadnoughts indicates a very close relationship between the aims of the German Empire and the Dual Monarchy. The preparation of the Naval Dockyards in Austria and the construction of these ships will necessarily take a few years to complete, and it is not improbable that these years may cover the term of the present Emperor's life, during which it is not likely that any further policy of adventure will be initiated. When the Archduke Franz Ferdinand comes to the throne a more active policy in close union with Germany may be anticipated.

The position of Italy as a member of the Triple Alliance is one of extreme difficulty owing to her military and naval weakness and to the sympathies of her Gov[ernmen]t and people being entirely with England and France. Italy may therefore be regarded, as far as England France and Russia are concerned as a neutral quantity in any conflict in the near future.

The internal situation in Russia, although showing great improvement, has not yet been consolidated and to embark on war under the present circumstances would be to throw the country once more into the hands of the revolutionaries. Although much has already been done to reorganise the Russian Army and to make good the deficiencies exposed during the Japanese war there still remains much to be done and it will require at least two or three years more before the Russian army is prepared for war. Peace is therefore essential to the internal security and prosperity of Russia.

In France also the internal situation gives cause for anxiety, and while the French people have confidence and pride in their army it is agreed on all sides that the French navy is a negligible quantity.

There are thus two powerful military Powers closely allied to each other occupying the centre of Europe capable, at least for the time being, of creating a military predominance in Europe, one of them on the road to completing an ambitious naval programme beyond its ordinary means, and the other about to follow its ally's example and to introduce Dreadnoughts into the Mediterranean.

To the East and West of this powerful combination remain the two allies Russia and France.⁽²⁾

(2) [The memorandum breaks off here. Originally there was a comma after "France" and the following sentences ended this part of the memorandum: "torn by internal dissensions and unable to face it unaided. The only Power that in the end would be able to support France and Russia in an independent position and to enforce peace would be England, so long as she maintains her absolute supremacy at sea and is consequently able to destroy in time of war German sea-borne trade." These lines are however crossed out. The rest of the memorandum exists only in a rough pencil draft.]

Russia and France [are] practically without navies, and until the Russian Army is regenerated, unable to face the Central Powers unaided. Were England the ally of either France or Russia the political equilibrium and peace of the Continent would probably be maintained since Germany would be unlikely to incur a war with France and Russia which would inevitably entail the destruction of her sea-borne trade. The question therefore arises whether it would be to the advantage of Great Britain to make an alliance with France and Russia.

If a promise to render material assistance in the event of war were invited by Russia and refused by Great Britain it is almost inevitable that Russia would be compelled by her military weakness to come to terms with Germany and to modify her attitude towards the aims of the Central Powers. The existing alliance of Russia with France would preclude for the present any possibility of the revival of the Drei Kaiserbund. It is probable that in such circ[umstance]s Russia would maintain her engagements towards England in Asia and would otherwise maintain a friendly attitude, while devoting herself to internal reform and the reorganisation of her military and naval forces.

It would be difficult under such circ[umstance]s for France to stand alone and to resist the pressure which will inevitably be exerted upon her by Germany to enter the political orbit of the latter Power. France ardently desires peace and, realising the temporary weakness of the Dual Alliance, would in the end lean towards the German constellation in Europe rather than occupy a position of isolation on the Continent. The result of the pressure which Germany would exert on Russia and France would probably be a demand for a guarantee by the two latter Powers of neutrality in the event of war between Germany and England. This idea has been foreshadowed by M. Clemenceau as already part of the foreign policy of the reactionary Gov[ernmen]t in Russia. So long as M. Clemenceau and M. Stolypine remain at the head of affairs in France and Russia respectively the question of such guarantee is not likely to be broached by Germany.

Were the above contingency to take place and England to find herself in a position of isolation in Europe there need be no cause for alarm in this country so long as the defensive forces of Great Britain are put and kept on an efficient footing and England's supremacy at sea is fully maintained so as to leave no possible doubt as to the result of a naval conflict with Germany. Even if Russia and France were to join a coalition against England which is unthinkable under present circ[umstance]s and therefore not worth seriously considering the national security and independence of this country need run no risk of being compromised provided that the above conditions are completely fulfilled. If they are not fulfilled the only, yet uncertain, course to pursue in the interests of national security would be to conclude an alliance with France and Russia. For such an alliance however public opinion in England is not at present prepared and there is a very large section of the population who would resent an alliance with Russia while under the rule of a reactionary Gov[ernmen]t.

The answer therefore to the question upon which this mem[orandu]m is based would be that H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] are unable to pledge themselves to render material assistance to Russia in the circ[umstances] foreshadowed in the question. It would be imprudent to give a pledge of this kind to a reactionary Gov[ernmen]t whose sympathies are with Germany and it w[oul]d be an alliance wh[ich] w[oul]d be a sham and in opposition to England the repres[entative] of liberal and Const[itutio]n[al] Gov[ernmen]t since it would bind the hands of H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] without entailing a similar obligation on the part of Germany. At the same time it must not be forgotten that although from time to time there may be a reactionary wave in Russia the Russia of the future will be liberal and not reactionary, and it would be a mistake to prejudice future Anglo-Russian relations by an alliance between England and a reactionary Gov[ernmen]t in Russia which would not be regarded with sympathy in either country while the position of the necessity for a strong combination of Powers a few years hence to resist an attempt

to create the permanent hegemony of Germany in Europe overshadows the general political situation. Moreover public opinion in this country which is in complete sympathy with the liberal and constitutional development of Russia does not yet sufficiently grasp the danger to Europe of Germany's ambitious designs, though undoubtedly anxiety on this score is gradually growing, and an agreement or Treaty to render material assistance to Russia in a war with Germany would not at present be in harmony with public sentiment in England.

It is the apprehension of the danger of German aims to the general peace and independence of Europe that has inspired both the question that has been considered in this m[em]o[r]andum and the reply that has been submitted, but it may be pointed out that there is a yet more serious and more insidious danger to England that must be carefully watched and avoided.

It is quite intelligible that some people after reading these views might suggest as an alternative policy that of coming to terms with Germany, and the basis of such an agreement has already been placed quite recently before H[is] M[ajesty's] Ambassador in Berlin by Baron Kiderlen, German Min[iste]r at Bucharest, the confidant of Prince Bulow who has been recently employed at the F[oreign] O[ffice] in Berlin. The basis of the proposed agreement was that either a political "entente" should be made such as would render increased naval construction on either side a source of satisfaction rather than of suspicion, or that a naval Convention should be made by which the two Powers should bind themselves for a fixed period:—

1. Not to make war against each other
2. To join in no coalition against either Power and
3. To observe a benevolent neutrality sh[oul]d either country be engaged in hostilities with any other Power or Powers.⁽³⁾

Were H[is] M[ajesty's] G[overnment] to fall into a trap of this kind the duration of the agreement would be strenuously employed by Germany to consolidate her supremacy in Europe while England would remain as a spectator with her hands tied. At the termination of the agreement Germany would be free to devote her whole strength to reducing the only remaining independent factor in Europe and if, relying upon a profusion of friendly assurances from Germany, which public opinion is always only too ready to believe and to accept as genuine, England had in the meantime neglected to maintain an absolutely predominant naval supremacy she would richly deserve the fate which would inevitably await her and compel her for the first time in her history to take her place amongst the satellites of the German constellation. Although it is unthinkable that any Gov[ernment] should ever be duped by such a transparent proposal as that made by B[aro]n Kiderlen which w[oul]d not have been put forward without P[rin]ce Bulow's knowledge and approval, it is as well that its dangerous character should be revealed and that the disastrous consequences which its adoption would entail should be fully realised.

⁽³⁾ [The section from "that either a political 'entente'" to this point is written by Lord Errington (now Lord Cromer), then Private Secretary to Sir C. Hardinge.]

APPENDIX IV.

KING EDWARD'S VISIT TO THE EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH AT ISCHL
12 AUGUST, 1908.

[*ED. NOTE.*—The visit of King Edward to the Emperor Francis Joseph in 1908 (*cp. supra*, pp. 208–11, No. 165, for the visit of August 15–16, 1907) took place on August 12. It is reported by Sir Charles (later Viscount) Hardinge in the Memorandum dated August 16 which follows. This is only part of a Memorandum, including the visit of King Edward to the German Emperor at Cronberg, the other half of which will be published elsewhere. Both parts will be given *in toto*. There is no other record of this Ischl visit to be found in the Foreign Office Archives. It will be seen that Sir Charles Hardinge gives more of his own conversations than those of His Majesty. But the inference is that the latter dealt only with Anglo-German rivalry and with Macedonia. According to Mr. Wickham Stead—*Through Thirty Years* (1924), I, p. 283—King Edward stated to him that the proposed annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina by Austria-Hungary formed no part of his conversation with the Austrian Emperor. This statement would appear to be confirmed by the evidence of Lord Redesdale, which is repeated by Sir Sidney Lee: *King Edward VII* (1927), II, p. 633. It will be noted, however, that Baron von Aehrenthal introduced the subject of Bosnia-Herzegovina in his conversation with Sir Charles Hardinge, without avowing the annexation design. It was not until some days later that the Emperor Francis Joseph consented to it. (Herr von Schoen reported rumours of annexation to Prince Bülow, after a conversation with Baron von Aehrenthal of September 5, *G.P.* XXVI, I, pp. 26–7.) Certain other views as to the conversation between King Edward and the Emperor Francis Joseph may be found expressed in *G.P.* XXIV, pp. 133–5 *nn.* and XXV, II, pp. 551–3 and *nn.*, with references to other authorities.]

Part of Memorandum by Sir C. Hardinge. (The Visit to the Emperor of Austria.)

Secret. 13147.*

August 16, 1908.

The King left Cronberg at 11 p.m. on the 11th instant, and arrived at Ischl on the following morning. The Emperor and the Archdukes received His Majesty at the station and accompanied him to the hotel. The meeting between the King and the Emperor was marked by evident warmth of feeling and pleasure at seeing each other again.

After luncheon at the Imperial villa the Emperor was graciously pleased to talk to me for some time. His Majesty expressed his warm satisfaction at the development of recent events at Constantinople, and especially at the recovery by England of the prominent position in the Turkish capital which, in his opinion, she should always have occupied. The account which he had read of the reception of the King's Ambassador had given him sincere pleasure. He was very glad that the Anglo-Russian scheme of reforms had been dropped, since his Government would not have been able to give it their full support owing to some of its provisions being, in their opinion, inconsistent with the sovereign rights of the Sultan. He was hopeful that the situation would develop satisfactorily and peacefully; but it would be necessary for some time to watch events carefully and to do nothing to embarrass the party of progress in their efforts for the regeneration of the Turkish Administration. He strongly deprecated any intervention. He expressed the hope that England and Austria would in the future work together in the Near East, even more closely than in the past, since the interests of the two countries were identical. He alluded with much satisfaction to the dismissal of the Palace camarilla, and condemned in strong terms their malpractices.

I told the Emperor that His Majesty's Government were most anxious to be on the most friendly terms with the Austrian Government, and to co-operate with them as much as possible for the peaceful development of the Balkan Peninsula. I admitted that His Majesty's Government had not been in full agreement with the Austrian Government during the past year in relation to the reform scheme and other matters, but now that the situation had been so profoundly modified as to render the application of a scheme of reforms unnecessary for the time being, I could see no reason why England and Austria should not continue their traditional policy

of working together in the Near East for the common good, in accordance with what I knew to be the sincere desire of His Majesty's Government.

The Emperor told me that the King had spoken to him of his desire to appoint Sir E. Goschen to the post of Ambassador at Berlin, and though he greatly regretted to lose his friendly services, which he much appreciated, he fully realized the importance of the King's Representative at Berlin being a *persona grata* to the Emperor, and he was pleased that the King had selected for the post of Ambassador at Vienna Sir F. Cartwright, of whom His Majesty had been able to speak so highly.

His Majesty expressed the hope that I would take the opportunity of having some conversation with Baron d'Aehrenthal during the course of the afternoon. This I had already arranged to do.

On the King's return to the hotel His Majesty received Baron d'Aehrenthal, and had a long conversation with him. The King informed me later that it was quite satisfactory.

Before going to see Baron d'Aehrenthal as had been agreed, I received a private message from him expressing the hope that I would abstain from any recriminations as to the past, since he also was not without grievances. I at once replied that, in view of the entirely new situation which had been created, it would, in my opinion, be a waste of time to discuss the past, but that I looked forward with pleasure to discussing with him the problems of the present and future.

On calling upon Baron d'Aehrenthal at his hotel, he expressed to me his pleasure at seeing me again, and at having an opportunity to clear away any differences which may have clouded Anglo-Austrian relations during the past year, which he was very anxious to re-establish on their former friendly and confidential footing. I assured him that I was confident that Sir E. Grey would warmly reciprocate that wish, and would do all that was possible to insure its fulfilment.

Baron d'Aehrenthal then proceeded to give me an exposition of Austrian policy in the following sense:—

The Austrian Government, while sincerely desiring to encourage and to carry out the Macedonian reforms initiated with the Russian Government, have constantly pointed out that the sovereign rights of the Sultan and the susceptibilities of the Mahomedan races should be respected. The main idea of the Mürssteg programme had been to improve the status of the Christians with the co-operation of the Sultan and not against him.

The Austrian Government had expressed doubts concerning the British proposals of the last few months since, in their opinion, the above principles had not received sufficient consideration. They were convinced that, even if all the Powers agreed and gave the proposals their most energetic support at Constantinople, the Sultan would not have been able to give his consent to them, because it would have entailed an outbreak on the part of his Mussulman subjects. Some of the English proposals would have led to the practical separation of the provinces in question, and to this the Sultan would never have submitted without war.

I inquired of Baron d'Aehrenthal to what proposals he referred. He replied that he referred to the proposal for an independent Governor-General with special powers. I remarked that this proposal had since been considerably modified.

Baron d'Aehrenthal continued by stating that the Austrian Government will, as hitherto, aim at obtaining an improvement in the administration of Turkey. They will be prepared to resume negotiations to that purpose at any moment that may be agreed upon by the Powers. Till then they will, in agreement with the policy sketched in Sir E. Grey's speech in the House of Commons, adhere to a waiting policy.

The Austrian Government seek no political interests in the three vilayets, and will pursue a policy of non-intervention. They have no special arrangement of any kind with the Turkish Government, such as has been suggested from St. Petersburg, and they desire the maintenance of the integrity of Turkey and no intervention.

Baron d'Aehrenthal denied that the policy of Austria, which had given rise to so much criticism, had been inspired from Berlin. The German Government did not receive information of the Sanjak Railway earlier than any of the other Cabinets. The action of Austria in this question had been inspired by her own special interests.

The Austrian Government hold firmly to the German alliance, which they regard as essential to their own interests and to the peace of Europe. The rivalry between England and Germany in naval policy does not concern the Austrian Government, although they regard it as not being without an element of danger. What the Austrian Government particularly desire is that any friction which may exist between London and Berlin may not react unfavourably on the friendly relations existing between Austria and England.

I thanked Baron d'Aehrenthal for his very clear exposition of Austrian foreign policy in the Near East, which I felt confident would entirely coincide with that of His Majesty's Government, especially as regards the policy of non-intervention and of the maintenance of the integrity of Turkey. As regards the question of Germany's naval armaments, I pointed out to Baron d'Aehrenthal that Austria, the ally of Germany, could contribute effectually to the cause of peace by acting as a drag on any ambitious naval policy which the German Government might be tempted to pursue. In reply to his inquiry as to whether the question of naval armaments had been discussed at Cronberg, I told him briefly what had passed. He frankly admitted that the attitude of the German Government, if persisted in, might in a few years' time bring about a very critical situation between England and Germany, which it was to everybody's interest to avoid. He wished, however, to tell me privately, and as a friend, that he had received certain indications of an undercurrent in Germany which was strongly opposed to the German naval programme, and that this current, fortified by the serious financial difficulties which the German Government had now to contend with, was daily growing in strength, and he was hopeful that, if nothing occurred to give this movement a set-back, the German Government might find themselves compelled to modify the law which they had made. As the ally of Germany, the Austrian Government were seriously preoccupied with this question, and he recommended that the Agents of the British Government in Germany should be invited to study and watch this movement. I thanked Baron d'Aehrenthal for his friendly suggestion, which I would not fail to report to Sir E. Grey.

Baron d'Aehrenthal inquired if His Majesty's Government had any intention, in view of recent developments at Constantinople, to modify the existing administrative machinery in Egypt. It was a question of considerable interest to the Austrian Government, since they had, in Bosnia and Herzegovina, an almost analogous situation to that in Egypt. I replied that it might prove necessary in the near future to extend the basis of government in Egypt, but that it was premature at present to decide what measures, if any, should be taken. He remarked that, Bosnia and Herzegovina being contiguous to Macedonia, the Austrian Government could hardly avoid making some sort of political concessions to the inhabitants of those two provinces. He alluded to the situation in Albania, remarking that the Austrian Government would under no circumstances put their hands into that hornet's nest, although he was not quite sure that the Italian Government would observe the same caution.

Altogether I found Baron d'Aehrenthal's attitude perfectly friendly, and he seemed anxious to obliterate any contrary impression. It was evident to me that the Austrian Government are apprehensive as to possible developments in naval rivalry between England and Germany. This is intelligible, since the Austrian Government are naturally most anxious not to be dragged into another war during the Emperor's lifetime for the ambitions of another Power, more especially as their army is quite unready for war, since the artillery has to be rearmed, and no money would be available when the markets of London, Paris, and Berlin are closed to them. Peace in Europe is therefore an absolutely essential condition for the Dual Monarchy.

The King left Ischl for Marienbad on the morning of the 13th instant, after a visit to the Emperor of Austria which had been entirely satisfactory in every respect.

CHARLES HARDINGE.

August 16, 1908.

[ED. NOTE.—As indicated above King Edward proceeded to Marienbad on the 13th, and there held important conversations with M. Isvolski and M. Clemenceau. No report of these is to be found in the Foreign Office Archives. But M. Clemenceau's conversation seems to be sufficiently indicated in Mr. Wickham Steed's *Through Thirty Years* (1924), I, pp. 283-91.]

APPENDIX V.

[ED. NOTE.—In *Twenty-Five Years* (1925), Vol. I, pp. 189-90, Lord Grey refers to the fact that he "was accused in Austria, and I think in Germany too, of having fomented trouble and tried to provoke a European war." The first telegram given below is apparently the basis for this statement.

Sir F. Cartwright to Sir Edward Grey.

Vienna, December 21, 1908.

F.O. 44602/31738/08/44A.

D. 1.50 P.M.

Tel. (No. 104.) Confidential.

R. 4.50 P.M.

I saw French Ambassador yesterday. He told me that he had it from well-informed sources, but not directly from Baron d'Aehrenthal, that a strong suspicion exists here that H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] at heart desires to bring about a European war. French Ambassador said suspicion was ridiculous but nevertheless existed and that my first duty here would be to restore confidence in aims of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment]. On my asking him what did Austria think England would gain by war, he replied "They believe here that while all Europe was fighting, Great Britain would so completely destroy German commerce on the High Seas that she would remain mistress of them for 25 years to come."

Difficulties created for Austria by Russia, Turkey, Italy and Serbia over annexation question are all attributed to British influence. French Ambassador is convinced that this suspicion is widespread in influential circles here. Newspapers continue to show renewed suspicion of Russia on account of her uncertain attitude with regard to Conference.

I am to see Baron d'Aehrenthal to-morrow at 2 o'clock.

Lord Grey prints further (*ib.*, p. 190) the paraphrased version of his reply to the above telegram, to "give some indication of my feeling at the injustice of the charge." The original of this reply is here printed.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Cartwright.

F.O. 44602/31738/08/44A.

Tel. (No. 215.)

Foreign Office, December 23, 1908.

Your tel[egram] No. 104.

Suspicion is absurd and preposterous: it is entirely opposed to the policy of H[is] M[ajesty's] Gov[ernment] and alien to the feeling of this country. It is not too much to say that readiness of Turkey to negotiate with Austria is to some extent due to our influence. In no single instance have we instigated or stiffened the opposition of Turkey, Serbia or Montenegro. All our influence has been used to moderate feeling and discourage impossible demands. We have actively worked for peace in face of the very strong feeling aroused in these countries by Baron d'Aehrenthal's own action. The accusations to the contrary which are being brought and believed in Austria against us can only diminish our power to continue to work for peace with any effect.

You can speak to Baron d'Aehrenthal and anyone else of importance, in the sense of this and my previous telegrams on the subject.]

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